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Board of Trustees meets to discuss Middlebury's future

By KATIE FUTTERMAN
Managing Editor

Middlebury's Board of Trustees wasted no time during their brief visit to campus at the end of October. Between Oct. 26 and Oct. 28, the Board covered a wide range of topics, including "For Every Future:" The Campaign for Middlebury, artificial intelligence, the Middlebury Institute for International Studies at Monterey (MIIS), conflict transformation and the college's financial health.

The trustees kicked off their time in Vermont with a panel on the current use of artificial intelligence at Middlebury and possible plans for the future. President Laurie Patton and trustee George Lee '88 facilitated a panel with Brooke Clarke '25, Katie Macalintal '24 and Amy Collier, associate provost for digital learning, according to the college's announcement on Nov. 14.

Clarke presented his recent Instagram poll on student opinion on artificial intelligence, which found that not everyone is on the same page about the usage of AI tools. Clarke's poll will serve as the launching point for future

Continued on Page 2

'Truth & Dare': TEDxMiddlebury returns to campus with challenges, inspiration for the community

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Staff Writer

SIMON LEIDERMAN / COURTESY PHOTO

Yuvraj Shah '26 aimed to educate the audience on the twice migration Kenyan-Indian people have experienced.

TEDxMiddlebury showcased a series of thought-provoking talks centered around this year's theme, 'Truth and Dare.' After seven months of meticulous planning, TEDx took to the Dana Auditorium stage in full form on Saturday, Nov. 11 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The event brought together four speakers who advocated for challenging conventional norms, embracing the power of storytelling and acknowledging the significance of remembrance.

TEDx talks are independently organized, given and planned by volunteers from local communities. All events follow the traditional TED conference format in which a variety of speakers deliver a talk, but each one has a different theme that links all of the talks together.

The TEDxMiddlebury board composed of 10 students began planning the most recent event last spring and worked together to execute the event by helping with planning as well as recruiting speakers, according to Dana Anderson, Innovation Hub associate director of Creativity & Innovation.

"Through weekly planning meetings at the Innovation Hub, every member of the team contributed to the event in a meaningful way: from applying for the TEDx license, to organizing the student speaker competition, to choosing the theme, to inviting speakers," Anderson wrote in an email to The Campus. "The student board exceeded all expectations and was just a joy to work with!"

According to the Tedx webpage, this year's theme of 'Truth & Dare," "Examines the contentions of truth and the 'dare' to defy what society holds self-evident in the 21st century."

Emcee Ignacio Gamero '26 welcomed the audience to Dana Auditorium on Saturday morning by explaining the significance of this year's theme.

"We as humans have the ultimate gift: we have the ability to think," Gamero told the crowd. "When we're presented with a struggle or faced with pressure we step back, we analyze, we reset and we rebuild. We accept the truth and we take on the dare."

The first speaker was Akshata Nayak, founder of children's book company 'Little Patakha.'

After noticing a critical gap in how popular childrens' literature often neglects to address bias — a concerning issue in light of how she highlighted that books significantly impact childhood development — Nayak confronted this issue by establishing her own company dedicated to crafting children's books that are not only entertaining

Continued on Page 2

Middlebury Muslim Students Association hosts vigil for Palestinian lives

By LIV SANCHEZ
Staff Writer

The Middlebury Chapel served as host to over 100 students, faculty and staff for the "Vigil for Palestine," the evening of Nov. 9. The vigil, planned by the Middlebury Muslim Students Association (MSA) featured a variety of speakers who mourned the loss of life in Gaza and reflected on how the Middlebury community has been affected by the ongoing violence in the region.

The event began with an Islamic chant of the 99 Divine Names, followed by a Quran recitation and translation by Middlebury students, remarks by members of MSA, Muslim Chaplain and Vice President of Equity and Inclusion.

MSA also screened an interview with Asem, a Palestinian child who was injured and whose parents were killed in a recent Israeli airstrike, and showed a picture of three young children, the oldest no more than seven, facing a pile of rubble.

The vigil closed with a

Continued on Page 3

INSPIRIT DANCE PRESENTS: "WHAT WE ASK OF FLESH"

By EDITH MAUCH
Contributing Writer

Associate Professor of Dance Christal Brown and her dance company, INSPIRIT debuted its breathtaking and unique dance piece titled "What We Ask of Flesh" at the Mahaney Arts Center last weekend. The show took place Nov. 9–11 and was wonderfully abstract, eerie and thought-provoking. Brown's own experience as a caregiver for patients with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, as well as the work of poet Remica Bingham-Risher, served as central inspirations for the performance.

"What We Ask of Flesh" featured Brown as director, choreographer and performer; Arielle Brown as dramaturge; Alex Diaz, Orlando Hunter, Malcom McMichael, Claudia-Lynn Rightmire, Ricarrdo Valentine and Robin Wilson as the performers; live harmonizing and music by Farai Malianga and Deborah Felmeth; media design by Scotty Hardwig; costumes by Trebien Pollard and lighting by Jennifer Fok. It is an inspiring and entirely original piece that Middlebury was fortunate to have debut on its own stage.

The performance began with an excerpt from Bingham-Risher's poetry that performers enacted with an explosion of energy and celebration. From that moment on, the show covered a wide breadth of themes, ranging from compassion, intimacy, spectatorship, violence, aging, disability, humility and imitation.

These themes spoke powerfully to spectators of the production.

"I resonated with the power of touch shared by the dancers. They expressed a range of emotions between them, something I rarely see in dance, and in what looked like the midst of pain, touch was a powerful source of comfort," Associate Professor of Theatre Olga Sanchez Saltveit, who attended the show, wrote in an email to The Campus.

Throughout the performance, the dancers, designers and crew did a fantastic job unpacking the complexity of emotion through dance and bending the boundaries of typical dance performances. Featuring a mixture of vocal harmonizing, performers' breath and the sound of feet stomping and running on the floor, this heartbreakingly beautiful installation redefined dynamics of kinship, family, love and violence.

Brown offered some remarks in the Artist Talkback following Friday night's performance.

"When violence and flesh come together, we call that birth," she said. "I don't make dances because I like dances... I make dances because I want to understand parts of me."

One of the most striking and beautiful elements of the performance was the costumes. Each costume was simultaneously coordinated and completely unique, all featuring the same color palette, baggy, draping look and slashes throughout resembling sagging skin. Each piece was also distinct, reflecting the personality and characters that the dancers were embodying.

During the artist talkback, Pollard reflected on his experience designing costumes for the show.

"It was very hard for me because I primarily work with myself. I was thinking about my own body, my own flesh, how it's changing," Pollard said.

Director of the Performing Arts Series Allison Coyne Carroll described her experience working with Professor Brown and INSPIRIT in an email to The Campus.

"The [Performing Arts] Series had previously been lucky enough to collaborate with Professor Brown on two previous residencies with her company INSPIRIT in 2009 and 2013, so we have always kept a dialogue open about works in progress," she wrote. "[Her dance company] only offers riveting performances, but also a robust itinerary of education residency activities for both our campus and community. They did movement master classes, an elementary school matinee, visited a music theory class, and more."

Everyone involved with the project spoke very highly of working with Brown. Some of her INSPIRIT students from the audience even voiced their opinions on her teaching style.

"[Brown] offers a lot of space for us to be ourselves," Hunter said.

When asked about her favorite part of the piece, Coyne Carroll summarized what seemed to be a resounding theme of the performance.

"For me personally, it was witnessing the array of artists from various backgrounds and Professor's Brown's career coming together to create such a vibrant narrative through a richly integrated tapestry of movement, text, imagery, music, costumes, lighting, and more."

JORDAN SAINT / COURTESY PHOTO

INSPIRIT dance company's performance, "What We Ask of Flesh" took place last weekend in Mahaney Arts Center.

NEWS

Summer flooding damages The Mill basement, closing community and performance space for repairs this fall
By CATHERINE GOODRICH

PAGE 3

LOCAL

Elli Parr Jewelry expands to Middlebury, aiming to build connection with local community
By SOPHIA SHEN

Liv, Love, Local: American Flatbread
By OLIVIA MUELLER

PAGE 4

OPINIONS

An unexpected defense of the Middlebury P.E. credits
By RYAN McELROY

Student death is now part of the routine at Middlebury
By EDITORIAL BOARD

PAGE 6

ARTS & CULTURE

Bom apetite! Dolci goes to Brazil
By MAGGIE BRYAN

"Spelling Bee" generates buzz, laughter in Wilson Auditorium
By OLIVIA MUELLER

PAGE 9

SPORTS

Winter Sports Previews
By SPORTS SECTION EDTIORS

Road to Newport News: Middlebury field hockey's post-season success and a look at what's next
By LEXI LINAFELTER

PAGE 11

Board of Trustees meets to discuss Middlebury's future

Continued from Page 1

inquiry.

"I suggested that we all learn to utilize it as a learner partner rather than something we use to break the honor code of the school," he wrote in a message to The Campus.

Collier presented a project from the Office of Digital Learning and Inquiry's faculty fellows program. The initiative supports faculty to identify places where generative artificial intelligence might enhance learning, Dan Chatham, director of academic iniatives at MIIS, wrote in an email to The Campus.

This project is designed for the MIIS course, helping students to manage people and resources in cross-cultural contexts and aims to help students practice working on challenging management situations, according to Chatham.

"This particular technology project was kind of a 'wish list' item, and working with Tom Woodward in DLINQ it has started to materialize. He's been able to translate this concept into an actual working persona generator and brought this to life," he wrote.

Tom Woodward, director of learning spaces and technologies, has developed the interface and logic of the AI persona generator, which can be tuned in to act as a dialogue partner from different cultures and demographics. In the next stage, more context, such as the student's job and name for the character, will be added, according to Chatham.

"The character will (eventually) interact with a student verbally after being configured with a text-based description of its persona, the context for the interaction, and some guidelines about how it should interact (be empathetic, exhibit frustration, etc)," Chatham wrote.

The trustees also visited the newly renovated Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building to attend the launch event of Middlebury's "For Every Future" campaign, which has raised $383 million of its $600 million goal as of this year. After the event, they walked over to the Dana Auditorium for a Moth-Up-style storytelling event, according to the college's press release.

"A few alums and a current student told stories with the theme of place. I can't do it justice by summarizing the stories. All I can say is that they were incredibly moving and reminded me of what makes Midd such a unique place," said recent graduate Trustee Kenshin Cho '20, who joined the board this year.

Next, Jeff Dayton-Johnson, vice president for academic affairs and dean of MIIS, updated the Board on the execution of the business plan for the institute. He highlighted a refocusing of the curriculum around global security, climate resilience and intercultural communication as well as the launch of several new online degrees.

The Board also heard from Sarah Stroup, director of the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation and professor of political science. The $25 million initiative has produced 36 Graduate Conflict Transformation Fellows, 28 K-12 teachers at the Bread Loaf School of English, 11 new faculty research projects, 96 undergraduates in a "CT Skills" course, 51 college faculty and staff trained in conflict transformation, 124 college and 27 MIIS student experiences and projects in Japan, Cameroon, Argentina and France, according to the college's announcement.

The Board established these as well as three additional learning goals: new understandings of conflict, the desire to understand self and others and a commitment to action are developed in collaboration with the heads of five different "pillars" of the collaborative and their patterns, Stroup wrote in an email to The Campus.

The Bread Loaf School of English added two new courses to its conflict transformation curriculum "Teaching, Writing and Acting for Change," which enrolled 28 K-12 teachers this past summer — "Oral and Community Histories, Rhetorics and Literacies" and "Disability Narratives in/as Conflict," according to the grant's 2023 mid-year report.

At Middlebury, the grant has funded classes, events and projects. In January 2023, Stroup, along with Associate Professor of Philosophy Steve Viner and international mediator Julian Portilla, taught the first "Conflict Transformation Skills" course. The grant has also funded several student internships, five Middlebury College Alternative Break Programs, three undergraduate participants in the Middlebury Social Impact Corps and a Social Entrepreneurship Fellow's project, according to the report.

The grant funded 44 Conflict Transformation Graduate Fellows for the 2022-23 academic year and currently are sorting through 93 applications for the 2023-2024 fellows, in addition to supporting further graduate and faculty research.

The report also included an assessment with MIIS cohort fellows. For three statements, one of which being "I am more prepared to work with people from backgrounds other than mine," the average response was 4.14 out of five (strongly agree).

The trustees also discussed Middlebury's current finances. The college ran an $8.2 million deficit this past fiscal year, an increase from the $4.5 million deficit last year, but a decrease from about $11 and $12 million in the three years prior, David Provost, executive vice president of finance, wrote in an email to The Campus. The college's announcement attributed the deficit to inflationary pressures, and Provost told The Campus that even with the operating deficits, the college financial wealth has grown over the past year from endowment returns and donor gifts.

Middlebury generated a tuition revenue consistent with past years. The total assets, which is everything the college owns, including buildings, the endowment and cash, increased from last year's record $2 billion to $2.015 billion, thanks to a $17 million increase in contributions from the campaign, according to the announcement.

The college's press release closed by announcing that the board passed two motions: one to approve the 2024–2025 Institute tuition and fees and another to establish a Doctor of Modern Languages in Japanese in the summer of 2024.

After a long few days of meetings, the trustees departed Middlebury. They will return for further discussions during J-Term.

"The board's role is an interesting one," Cho said, reflecting on his first experience as a trustee. "You don't want to supplant the administration or the faculty in making decisions that are in their realms, but you also owe a duty to the institution to be informed on what's going on and make certain high-level strategic decisions that are in the school's interest. This was my first meeting, and I tried to listen and figure out what our role as trustees are."

Snow Bowl looks towards the upcoming ski season by hosting open house, Gobble Hobble fun-run

By EDITH MAUCH
Contributing Writer

PIPER HARRING / COURTESY PHOTO

Before too much snow covers the ground, participants in the Gobble Hobble had the chance to run up and down Worth Mountain.

The Snow Bowl slopes have not opened for the winter season yet, but that has not stopped the college's ski mountain from welcoming students and community members to its grounds. On Saturday, Nov. 11, the Snow Bowl hosted an open house and artisan market from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with food, games, vendors, door prizes, live music and a turkey trot dubbed the "Gobble Hobble."

"This is the second time we have had an open house, however, it is the first time we have ever built the event to this size and scope," wrote Derrick Cram, ski shop manager at the Snow Bowl, in an email to The Campus. "The artisan market, turkey trot, food trucks, and more have been added to really make this an event that has something for everyone."

The main event was the Gobble Hobble, a turkey trot-inspired fun run in which participants followed a route all the way up and down Worth Mountain from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Organizers implemented a rolling start in which runners could choose to start any time within one of the four hour-long time slots, which enabled participants of all speeds to run the race.

There were prizes for the fastest, median and slowest times of the Gobble Hobble, so everyone, regardless of pace or experience level, had a chance to win a prize. In addition to their prizes, the winners' names were added to the Gobble Hobble plaque, a marker mounted on the Worth Mountain outhouse on top of the Worth Mountain Cliffs. For spectators who did not participate in the Gobble Hobble, there were chances to win other prizes just for being in attendance.

"The Gobble Hobble is a really fun community event. The Bowl is no joke. It packs a punch! Overall, a great day," wrote Annie Leithead '23.5, one of the racers who participated in the Gobble Hobble in an email to The Campus.

Emily Jones '23.5 also participated in the Gobble Hobble and agreed that it was a fun, yet surprising experience.

"Running the Gobble Hobble provided a new perspective on a familiar playground. Having skied and run these trails many times, I thought I knew what to expect, but the snowy shoulder season conditions are always full of surprises," Jones wrote in an email to The Campus.

She also reflected on the value the Snow Bowl adds to the college experience at Middlebury.

"We're all incredibly lucky to spend four years (or more) in a place with such incredible trail access and stewards of local land, and the Snow Bowl is no exception," Jones wrote. She expressed her gratitude to all the people who made this year's event possible.

Jones expressed her gratitude to the volunteers and organizers that made this year's event possible. " Their dedication ensures that the Snow Bowl remains a hub of community life for many seasons to come," Jones wrote.

During the open house, there was live music playing from local bands Hancock Daze and First Chair, giving participants the chance to dance while enjoying the wide variety of food and treats.

Skiing and snowboarding enthusiasts had the chance to register for snow sports programs for all skill levels. There was also a ski shop sale with a variety of gear, clothing and other essentials for skiing and snowboarding for sale.

Student attendees came not only from the class of 2027, who are eligible for free season passes to the Snow Bowl this season, but students from a range of class years dropped by the event for a chance to connect with fellow winter sports enthusiasts, explore the mountain and participate in the variety of programming.

In order to ensure students can easily visit the Snow Bowl throughout the ski season, a bus will run to the Snow Bowl directly from campus. "The [bus] schedule is currently being finalized but will be a much more comprehensive schedule. With trying to help student workers get to the mountain earlier and help cater to anyone joining us for night skiing, we have really tried to make some logical adjustments," Cram wrote.

Community members who missed the open house can still take full advantage of the Snow Bowl this season. When the mountain opens, the Snow Bowl will again be offering lessons and equipment rental and services.

One avid skier, Ben Conway '26, expressed his enthusiasm about skiing at the Snow Bowl this winter and working as a ski instructor over J-Term. "I'm very excited for the upcoming Snow Bowl season. The skiing and atmosphere at the Snow Bowl [is] one of my favorite parts of Middlebury," Conway wrote in an email to The Campus. "My plan is to visit the Snow Bowl after Thanksgiving break when there is hopefully snow on the ground. Fingers crossed!"

'Truth & Dare': TEDxMiddlebury returns to campus

Continued from Page 1

but also informative, inclusive and multicultural.

"I want this to be a model of what truly inclusive and fun products can look like," Nayak said. "Where we address the situations and concerns with intention, care and subtlety to normalize the conversations and help kids, nudge them, to stay connected with their open and accepting nature."

She finished her talk by urging audience members to reflect on the kinds of books they read for pleasure and how they could implement books into their lives that are more inclusive.

The next talk was given by Phil Chodrow, a computer science professor at Middlebury. Chodrow highlighted the importance of data science as a means of protest, activism and resistance.

"Some of you here might already be powerful in data science," he said. "I want you to ask yourself, how can you use those skills to contribute to a more just, equitable, peaceful and sustainable world?"

Chodrow also discussed how data science has been used to map phenomena such as police violence and homelessness in Vermont, which has helped facilitate more meaningful change by providing a statistical backbone for social and infrastructural change to be carried out.

Then, an official TEDx video was displayed in which Jasmina Aganovic, CEO of the beauty biotech company, Arcaea, discussed challenging the beauty industry using biology. After a brief intermission, another official TEDx video from activist Loretta J. Ross played, where Ross advocated for the importance of calling people in — that is, holding them accountable in a way that invites them into a conversation — rather than calling people out.

Yuvraj Shah '26 then resumed the live portion of the event with a talk centered around a twice migration story that Kenyan-Indian people have faced due to British imperialism. Shah is Kenyan-Indian and has moved to the United Kingdom, but he considered these parts of his identity to also be part of his family history. Unfortunately, Shah said, not many people know this migration story, so he gave this talk to educate people about this history.

"We will never truly be forgotten," Shah said. "Our destiny may have already been written, but we can still take control of it. There is still time. History is always written by the victors, but I think it's way more important to ask the losers to tell us what they thought."

Following Shah's talk, students in the audience from Kenya and Venezuela remarked on how touched they were by Shah's story and how his words deeply resonated with them and their own family histories.

"Writing this TEDx was especially difficult because it was attempting to put 200 years of history into a 17-minute talk, for an audience that had little context about what I wanted to share," Shah wrote in an email to The Campus. "But once I realized that the essence of my talk was to tell my own story I just wrote what I've always wanted to say, and in a way, I was forced to grapple with and examine how I choose to define my own identity. By writing and presenting this TEDx I understood I cannot truly define myself, and I don't think I ever want to."

Finally, visitor Larry Hayes spoke about the importance of storytelling. Hayes discussed growing up with a stutter that affected his confidence and social-skills. He said that he was able to improve his verbal fluency by telling stories, and he believes that storytelling can be used to challenge the binary, in line with the theme of the morning.

"Remind yourself that the truth is we all have the ability to turn love to hate," Hayes said. "We all have the ability to include the excluded. We all have the ability to say 'I was wrong,' and that's where the dare comes in. We have to dare ourselves to use and act on that ability whenever we can."

TEDxMiddlebury's return to full form this fall allowed students, professors, alumni and local residents to participate in conversations in order to challenge themselves, their peers and their community.

"Seeing people from our school community give such thorough and well-spoken speeches was incredibly inspiring," said El Fahey '26, one attendee of the TEDxMiddlebury event. "I really took the message of challenging the binary with me after I left. It was definitely worth waking up early on a Saturday."

Summer flooding damages The Mill basement, closing community and performance space for repairs this fall

By CATHERINE GOODRICH
Staff Writer

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Mill basement flooded this summer, and has been closed for the entirety of the fall semester, but Facilities plans to finish restoring the space by the start of the spring 2024 semester.

The basement of The Mill, a popular social house focused on music and student culture, was severely damaged by flooding this summer. The ongoing project to repair the space has closed the beloved community and performance space for the fall 2023 semester, although the renovations are predicted to finish by the start of the spring semester at the latest.

The heavy storm on Aug. 3 and 4 brought 6 inches of rainfall to Addison County in a two-and-a-half-hour period, which caused flash flooding downtown, a number of road closures and a water main break on Route 116.

At the college, the damage was minimal. Director of Facilities Services Mike Mosner explained that most spaces on campus were not significantly affected, but there was a short-term overload of the campus stormwater system and some lower levels of buildings, such as the Mill, did flood.

"Buildings 'downhill' from main campus were significantly impacted, particularly basements and levels below ground. The Mill, Twilight Hall, and other houses on Route 30 included," Mosner wrote in an email to The Campus. "The lower level of The Mill is in the process of full restoration. This work will be complete for the start of Spring semester 2024 at the latest."

President of the Mill Steil '24 shared that it has been a challenge for their social house to host music events without their typical basement venue, and The Mill has only been able to host one band from outside of Middlebury this semester.

"It's been a balancing act trying to have music events without a venue… I think our actual basement space brought a certain vibe to the music we host that we can't emulate in other spaces," Steil wrote in a message to The Campus.

Steil also shared that some of The Mill's belongings were damaged and lost in the summer flooding. Decorations and equipment were replaced, but the loss of some items with sentimental value could not be restored.

"It was generations of mill legacy items, passed down from graduated students that had a place in our home, but because The Mill as an organization did not purchase them, we could not get them replaced," Steil wrote.

On campus, The Mill is known as a social house with a focus on music and culture where members regularly host parties and shows, including both student and visiting DJs and bands. Located on South Street just downhill from Twilight Hall toward town, The Mill is home to eight students and a cat, and has an expansive membership in addition to frequently hosting events that welcome non-members.

In a typical semester, The Mill basement and downstairs recreation room are a social hub for Middlebury students. Mira Ward '24 shared her perspective on closure of the basement, describing how last semester she was able to perform at several events such as Punk Night and jazz concerts, as well as with various indie rock groups.

"It's really too bad that it isn't an active venue for Midd's music scene right now. Because the Mill is all about music, it encouraged students who play an instrument to get together and jam a ton with an upcoming event in mind," Ward wrote in a message to The Campus. "Now there are just less spaces to do that in."

Steil described the significance of The Mill as a social environment to many students on campus.

"The basement of the Mill was our way of holding true to the 'music social house' of it all. Being able to host DJs and bands, whether from on campus or out of town, was really a fantastic way to bring people together," Steil wrote.

Steil added that they were initially drawn to The Mill because they saw it as a center for count-culture of sorts on campus — "I enjoyed every event that I went to at the Mill and I love the people. I feel like it's an environment that really encourages you to express yourself, and it's a place to feel safe."

Abby Wilkins '23.5 shared her perspective on The Mill's social scene in a message to The Campus. She reflected on how her lower engagement with The Mill this semester may have resulted from the closure of the space.

"I wonder if it has culturally changed The Mill too and I am less in it for that reason too," Wilkins wrote. "The Mill basement was just the perfect place at the end of the night where you knew things were still happening and could get your dance on."

With the basement closed, The Mill pivoted to hosting performances from some student bluegrass and jazz bands in the living room upstairs. They hosted "Live Jazz Night at the Mill" on Oct. 7, for the living room space provided a cozy atmosphere, Steil wrote.

Scott Li '23.5, who performed at the jazz event after performing in the basement in prior years, was glad his music was still able to reach people.

"The mill basement vibe doesn't really fit the jazzy vibe anyways," he wrote in a message to The Campus.

Still, Li expressed that the closure was a disappointment, as The Mill hosts his and his friends' favorite parties.

"I think our actual basement space brought a certain vibe to the music we host that we can't emulate in other spaces," Steil wrote.

The Mill has continued to host other typical social programming this fall, including bagel nights on Thursdays, with a smaller capacity. "These events are notably smaller than they have been in the past, but we've still been able to offer our special little corner of campus to the community at large," Steil wrote.

The absence of The Mill basement has been felt acutely this fall, often leaving a large question mark for students looking for somewhere lively and inclusive to go on weekend evenings. The Mill basement's return to operations next semester comes as a highly anticipated refreshment for Mill frequenters.

Editor's Note: Editor in Chief Maggie Reynolds '24 and Managing Editor Katie Futterman '24 contributed reporting.

"A SLICE OF PARADISE AT 15,000 FEET"

Study Abroad Photo Contest Winner

PHOTO BY NOAH GETTINGS '24

CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH NEAR LLAMAC, PERU

My backpacking partner, Jamie Hackney, takes in the view from the aptly-named Mirador Tres Lagunas (Three Lakes Overlook) in the heart of the Cordillera Huayhuash. We paused here for an hour during our ascent of Siula Pass to appreicate what turned out to be the best 10 straight days of jaw-dropping beauty on the Huayhuash Trek.

Middlebury Muslim Students Association hosts vigil for Palestinian lives

Continued from Page 1

scrolling screen of the names of over 10,000 victims who have died in Gaza from Israeli bombardments since Oct. 7 in order of their ages. The segment of names which had the designation of "0 years old" next to them was one of the longest. The room sat in silence.

It was originally intended for a smaller group of students to gather in the Axinn Winter garden, but the college then offered MSA the chapel's space due to interest in attending and growing support for Palestine among the community, according to an email from the MSA Board to The Campus. MSA requested anonymity for all of their responses, wishing to only be identified as a collective organization.

The organization took approximately two weeks to plan the event and coordinate technical details, then began spreading the word around campus about four days before the vigil took place.

Grace Mtunguja '26 attended the vigil and appreciated seeing such a big turnout for the event.

"I don't know—can you describe a vigil as beautiful? I thought it was beautiful and well-done," Mtunguja said. "I feel like they did a good job of keeping it non-political — like it was really just about the lives that were lost. Mourning those who die shouldn't be made into a political thing, because at the end of the day, they're all lives."

She added that with the pressure of schoolwork at Middlebury, it can be difficult to take time to grieve. "I think that time and space for grieving is important and grief is something that should be accepted and accommodated for," Mtunguja said.

The vigil began with a statement from a representative of MSA reflecting on the purpose and emotional power of the vigil.

"Tonight, this is a shared space where we unite in solidarity, empathy, and support for the Palestinian people. Tonight, we come together as a community, transcending boundaries, to honor and mourn the lives lost, while advocating and speaking for the living," she said.

Hussain began by thanking MSA for creating a space for members of the Middlebury community to come together.

"It matters that we are here in this moment of profound grief - for many of us - we have not always known if it is acceptable to publicly mourn for the peoples of the Arab world and express heartache, without being misunderstood," he said. "I've sat with students who have anguished over the devastation of Gaza, trying to hold things together as an entire world falls apart…," Hussain continued. "We all deserve room to hurt out loud in our community. We deserve to really listen and really see one another."

Collective mourning was shared by MSA board members.

"The sufferings endured by the Palestinians are not a burden to bear alone—it is a call to action for us all…Let us not be bystanders to history, but active participants in a movement towards a world where every life holds value, where every dream finds hope, and where every child grows up without fear," a speaker said.

The Muslim Chaplain also gave remarks.

"We have sat longer on our prayer and meditation mats and called on and bore witness. We have had to break out of our autopilot modes of emotion and sincerely feel, and in turn come to life. Amidst this, the God that is never found in bloodshed, reappears. He comes in our heartbreak, in our witnessing, and in our movement towards a peace that heals structural inequalities and injustices," she said.

Ellen Sosa-Pena '26 also attended the vigil and shared her experience.

"I walked in, and right away I felt a sense of people coming together, of vulnerability. I was a little surprised to see cops inside the church, but since they had it at the Israel vigil, I guess it makes sense?" she said.

Parked in front of Gifford Hall nearby The Chapel was a Middlebury Police squad car, which remained in place throughout the vigil. "We deemed it most appropriate to provide an assurance of security for those who wanted to attend the Vigil to honor the Palestinians," the MSA board wrote in an email to The Campus. "We aimed to remove any concerns about personal safety for all in attendance as we mourned and paid tribute to the unfathomable loss of lives in Gaza and other Occupied Palestinian Territories."

There was also a police presence at the Oct. 11 vigil mourning Israeli victims killed in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack.

Kemi Fuentes-George, associate professor of Political Science, told The Campus that he is concerned that what is happening in Gaza could be the prelude to ethnic cleansing.

"I am aware that there are a substantial number of people in Netanyahu's orbit who believe in a second Nekba, and the ethnic cleansing of as much of the Palestinian Territories as they can. And I know that this is supported especially by far-right movements, and it's demonstrated by the behavior of settlers in the West Bank," Fuentes-George said.

Despite this analysis, Fuentes-George said that he does not anticipate that the killing in Gaza will be recognized as ethnic cleansing as a result of the position the U.S. holds on the UN Security Council.

Middlebury Students for Justice in Palestine recently hosted a teach-in event attended by over 250 students that shared context on the Israel-Gaza war and provided a solemn opportunity to learn about the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

MSA board members told The Campus that the environment for Muslim students on campus has changed since the beginning of the war in Gaza, specifically for those students who are visibly Muslim.

"As Muslims, advocating for the oppressed is our moral obligation," MSA wrote. "While the Vigil doesn't even begin to do justice to the suffering, oppression, and death endured in Palestine, it ensures that the Palestinian struggle for justice and the basic human right of freedom remains a foremost concern in our hearts and actions."

Editors' Note: Managing Editor Katie Futterman '24 contributed reporting.

LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: AMERICAN FLATBREAD

Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

A mainstay of the Middlebury restaurant scene since 2002, American Flatbread launched a creative Sunday brunch this past March to complement its dinner menu of customizable flatbreads, salads and desserts. The brunch menu consists of not only flatbread pizzas, but also a range of brunch-specific pastries, yogurt and drinks available only on Sundays.

Owner and General Manager Danielle Boyce originally joined the Flatbread team in 2006 as a restaurant manager, back when the Flatbread concept was a bakery producing partially-baked, frozen flatbread pizzas during the week and restaurant dining on the weekends. After the bakery side ended in 2009, the restaurant shifted its business model to operate five nights a week.

Boyce bought the Middlebury location from original founder George Schenk in 2011 and has operated the eatery since. The restaurant's emphasis on local, organic sourcing has stayed constant, while Boyce and her team have also found ways to make the restaurant unique within the Flatbread franchise, which now has 11 locations across Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine and Connecticut.

"Suddenly, my job changed," Boyce said. "Over the next year or two like the pieces started to fall into place. And it just made sense to buy it at the time."

A decade ago, Boyce introduced a bar in what used to be the freezer space for the former bakery. "I'm super proud of where the bar has come over the last 10 years since the bar was built," Boyce said.

The timber-framed pavilion in Flatbread's outdoor space, which can seat 75 people and host groups of over 100, was an addition during the pandemic.

"[It] is a great outdoor space for the community to gather for outdoor dining or host private events," Restaurant Manager Joe Hans wrote in an email to The Campus. The framing was executed by Goosewing Timberworks in Lincoln, Vt.

"It's a relatively sought after place to have large groups for celebrations," Boyce said of the recently added pavilion. "I love that we can contribute to the community… Just really special moments in our lives that we get to be a part of is super rewarding."

Between the renovated bar and expanded outdoor space, Flatbread has been able to broaden its event offerings. While the pavilion is popular during the warmer months, in colder weather the bar area can accommodate up to 50 people and the oven room can fit up to 200 people during regular business hours, Flatbread Events Manager Michaela Davico wrote in an email to The Campus.

American Flatbread sources its ingredients seasonally from dozens of local farms, apiaries and butchers. "We use local fruits, vegetables, and meats from our Vermont farms 100% when they're in season," Head Chef Jennifer Stratman wrote in an email to The Campus. Even out of season, the kitchen prioritizes organic ingredients.

The popular apple bacon cheddar flatbread, also known as the A.B.C., was created in Middlebury about a decade ago and has spread organically to the Flatbread franchise's other locations across New England.

"What's kind of cool about that is the other Vermont Flatbreads have asked if they could put it on their menu," Boyce said of the A.B.C.

In recent years, American Flatbread has added options with chicken rather than pork-based proteins, as well as vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. "Our current chef is really fantastic about having something for everyone on the menu. So you don't have to worry as much if you're vegan or vegetarian, you can still eat," Boyce said.

Led by Stratman, a self-identified brunch fiend, the launch of the new brunch menu was inspired by some of the most intense innovation and dish development for the team in recent years. "As soon as I was in a position to return brunch to Middlebury, I was ready with menu ideas blazing," Stratman wrote.

Stratman developed two brunch-specific pizzas to represent Flatbread's roots with a breakfast twist. Lox of Love features smoked salmon, while the Shakshuka pizza combines tomato, feta cheese and herbs with sunny side up eggs baked directly onto the pizza to create a runny, dippable yolk. The team refined the rest of the menu to balance out offerings for a well-rounded breakfast feel beyond solely baked goods and breads.

Other brunch staples include biscuits and gravy, house-made fermented yogurt and maple pecan cinnamon rolls. Some items can be made vegan, such as vegan mushroom gravy on the biscuits. Boyce also created a grain-free scone using almond flour and the whey from the 24-hour fermented yogurt. The recipe was inspired by recent dietary changes her family made as they adjusted to her daughter's health condition, which requires a grain-free diet.

"It's like this tiny little snippet of how we're living our lives," Boyce said. "It's been really cool to share that and it's actually selling which is a source of pride for me."

Beyond food, the brunch drink menu has been painstakingly crafted. Coffee comes from Iluminar Coffee, roasted just across the parking lot in the Marble Works district. Head Bartender Alicia Pierson developed the brunch cocktail menu through detailed research on trending brunch cocktails and a healthy dose of experimentation. The cocktail side features two brunch staples, a Bloody Mary and a Mimosa, and two that rotate seasonally.

"I put organic tomato juice into it and just the right amount of spice. It's obviously a signature drink everywhere for brunch," Pierson said from behind the bar as she poured a Bloody Mary. The current seasonal drinks include an Aperol spritz and a gin-based cocktail.

"I think gin and Aperol in general are great to have for brunch. They're bright, easy drinking in the morning," Pierson said. Pierson described the Bloody Mary as her favorite she has ever had, made unique by a balance of spices and a pickled garnish.

OLIVIA MUELLER/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The shakshuka pizza combines tomato, feta cheese and herbs along with sunny side up eggs baked directly onto the pizza.

Non-alcoholic drink options at the brunch options include the Sober Juniper, a fresh, bubbly gin and tonic-esque mocktail sweetened with juniper berry simple syrup. The Rock You "Like" a Hurricane includes a blend of passion fruit, grenadine, orange juice and lime garnished with an orange slice for a more colorful drink.

"I kind of went for those like trial and error. What uses what purees? What tastes good together?" Pierson said.

Brunch is available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays. With a menu the team is excited about, the main challenges to adjusting to the new Sunday morning hours have been staffing and getting the word out.

While Middlebury being a small town means it has a limited labor pool, Boyce said she has been impressed by the dedication of the small but mighty team that has rebounded since the pandemic.

"It's so cool to see the buy-in, to see them excited and creative and wanting to run that restaurant well. And they're doing it," Boyce said.

Josh Hulbert '24.5 started working at Flatbread in the fall of 2021, in kitchen roles and as a host. Hulbert wrote in an email to The Campus that he enjoys working with his fellow team members and connecting to the broader Middlebury community.

"Everyone is very supportive throughout shifts and despite the fast-paced environment, we still have a good time together," Hulbert wrote. "I definitely have learned to appreciate the local community at Middlebury, seeing similar faces of town members and hearing their fun life stories, and meeting their families."

While American Flatbread has been in Middlebury for decades relying predominantly on word-of-mouth to attract business, spreading the word about newer offerings like the brunch menu has been more difficult.

"We're tucked away you know, we're not in downtown or anything like that," Boyce said.

Several customers, both residents and college students alike, said they only recently discovered Sunday brunch, despite its launch in mid-March. "This is our first time coming in and doing brunch," said Emma Tzotschew '23.5 on a recent Sunday in November. Tzotschew and her friends tried the shakshuka and apple bacon cheddar flatbreads, paired with a Sober Juniper and classic Bloody Mary. They were impressed by the food and the environment of Flatbread on a Sunday.

"I like the vibe in here," Louisa Stevens '23.5 said, sitting at the bar area with a full view of Pierson shaking up cocktail orders. The space retains its cozy hearthside atmosphere during the day but brightens the space with natural light.

Hans believes this newest change to Flatbread's operations fills a gap in Sunday morning dining options in Middlebury.

"When I first started, there wasn't a day that went by when we weren't constantly changing or pivoting to the challenges," said Hans, who joined the Flatbread team in the midst of the pandemic in October 2020.

While evening dine-in customer volume has bounced back from the takeout-only phases of the pandemic, Hans hopes the Middlebury community appreciates the new brunch offering. A number of other breakfast and brunch spots in Middlebury including Shiretown Marketplace, Haymaker Bun Company and Middlebury Bagel, are closed on Sundays.

"We can continue to offer our community an alternative dining option on Sunday mornings, which is something Middlebury is currently lacking," Hans wrote.

OLIVIA MUELLER/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
American Flatbread launched a creative brunch menu in March.

The Campus is hiring!

We are seeing applicants for the News, Local, Opinions, Arts & Culture and Multimedia sections. We are also looking for Layout and Copy editors — no prior experience with The Campus necessary. Please send a one to two paragraph statement of interest and brief writing sample to campus@middlebury.edu. We are always welcoming new writers, too. Email campus@middlebury.edu and we can help you get started.

SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY IN MIDDLEBURY SERVES VERMONT'S AGING POPULATION, PROVIDING VARIETY OF CARE, ACTIVITIES

By EDITH MAUCH
Contributing Writer

With a median age of 42.7 years old, Vermont is the third oldest state in the nation. Nearly one out of every five Vermonters is over the age of 65, according to Peter Nelson, professor of geography.

A senior living community in Middlebury aims to serve the large elderly population in the state by providing independent living, assisted living, memory care and temporary care. Located off Route 7 on Lodge Road, The Residence at Otter Creek houses over one hundred seniors from the Addison County area.

The senior living community is part of the broader privately-owned company Benchmark, which aims to build and acquire high-quality senior living communities, according to Tracy Van Hoven, sales and marketing director at The Residence. Benchmark owns and operates 30 senior living communities mostly in New England and the New York City metropolitan area, including three residences in Vermont, Van Hoven said.

According to Courtney Allenson, senior reflections and engagement director at The Residence, the 141 residents currently living at senior living community are housed in 131 apartments. 30 of those apartments are cottages for more independent residents, Allenson added.

The residents are on average between 70 and 82 years old, Allenson said, and about 70% of them live independently, meaning they are able to go about their daily lives without the assistance of the senior living community staff to cook their meals or do their dishes and laundry, among other tasks.

"I love our residents so much. They're incredible people," she said.

Allenson and Van Hoven described a variety of activities that the senior living community hosts in an effort to keep its residents active and engaged. These activities include weekly live music and fitness classes, such as aqua aerobics, tai chi, band classes, cardio drumming and barre.

"Regardless of care level, everyone participates in all activities," Van Hoven said.

The Residence fulfills a growing need for more senior living facilities in the state of Vermont. According to a recent New York Times article on the labor shortage in Vermont, the state is struggling to retain and employ younger people while also supporting a growing population of retirees.

"More than a fifth of Vermonters are 65 or older, and more than 35 percent are over 54, the age at which Americans typically begin to exit the workforce," the article stated. "No state has a smaller share of its residents in their prime working years."

In addition to pressures on the labor market, the aging population in Vermont has impacts on the housing market in the state, Nelson told The Campus. Of occupied housing units, 30% have a resident over the age of 65, and 14% of those units are occupied by someone over the age of 65 living alone, higher than the national rate of 11%, according to Nelson.

Nelson added that creating more senior housing would be helpful to opening up thousands if not tens of thousands of housing units across the state.

Addison County has three residential care homes to support the roughly 40,000 people living in the county: The Residence, Eastview at Middlebury and Shard Villa. The County also has one nursing home, Helen Porter Healthcare and Rehab Center, according to the State of Vermont disabilities, aging and independent living webpage.

Van Hoven and Allenson described the opportunities for volunteers to get involved in a variety of ways at The Residence. Possibilities for volunteers include being matched with a resident with whom the volunteer goes on walks, reads books, does arts and crafts, or simply chats.

Volunteers may also get the chance to connect with Middlebury alumni and/or former faculty and staff living at the senior community, Allenson said. "All [of the] residents look after each other. It's a big family," she added.

The Residence has a number of resident-run activities and organizations as well, including the Resident-Advisory Council, which provides a space for its members to speak up about their concerns and future hopes for the living community. The community also has a resident-run group that convenes to discuss a different New Yorker article each week.

The senior living community also hosts periodic events with outside lecturers, sometimes including Middlebury professors.

Middlebury Professor of Political Science Matthew Dickinson gave his first lecture to The Residence over a decade ago, and has given at least one lecture every year at the senior living community. Dickinson's lectures generally focus on the state of American politics, and often more specifically on presidential and midterm elections.

"I enjoy the questions [during talks]," he wrote in an email to The Campus. "Also the need to turn political science research into a presentation that is accessible to the non-experts is really helpful to me, and to my Middlebury students as well.

Dickinson added that the fact that he is giving a one-time lecture, rather than weekly lectures as he does in his political science classes or at his politics luncheons makes the audience particularly engaged in what he has to say.

"I also have to take more of a big picture take on the issue, since I can't elaborate in subsequent lectures. But in many respects it's a lot like teaching Middlebury students," he wrote.

The senior living community has upcoming lectures scheduled to be given by Dickinson and Professor of Anthropology Michael Sheridan.

According to New York Times, the aging population in Vermont offers a look at how demographics across the country will soon look. Catering to this elderly population, The Residence aims to provide quality care to the 20.3% of Addison County residents who are over the age of 65 according to the 2021 American Community Survey.

Editor's Note: Editor in Chief Maggie Reynolds '24 contributed reporting to this story.

TRACY VAN HOVEN/ COURTESY PHOTO
A resident, Joe (left), and an associate, Sadie, at the senior living community.

Elli Parr Jewelry expands to Middlebury, aiming to build connection with local community

By SOPHIA SHEN
Contributing Writer

Middlebury students and residents no longer have to travel to Shelburne, Vt. or look online to find merchandise from Elli Parr, a hand-crafted jewelry business.

The store's new location at 48 Main Street in downtown Middlebury, which opened this past May, is the place for local jewelry-lovers to visit as it looks to further connect with the Middlebury community, according to Elli Parr owner Sara Nelson.

Nelson started Elli Parr Jewelry as a hobby nearly nine years ago while working full-time for a marketing company. She has always been artistic, but it was not until 2014, following the birth of her first daughter, that Nelson felt what she described as the urge to "create" once again.

She began exploring the arts of painting, pottery, interior design and eventually jewelry. Her passion for jewelry grew as friends and family expressed interest in her pieces, Nelson recalled.

Nelson started selling her jewelry through various home trunk shows, small markets and eventually social media. A few years later in 2021, Nelson made the decision to leave her full-time job and make Elli Parr Jewelry her primary focus.

ELLI PARR/COURTESY PHOTO
Elli Parr sells local handcrafted jewelry, here on display in their new Middlebury location.

Based on a couple of years of experience operating the Elli Parr shop in Shelburne, Vt., Nelson described Shelburne as a small town with a strong sense of community and incredible shop-keepers. Nelson said she gets that same feeling in Middlebury.

"The past ten plus years I would spend my summers driving through Middlebury to visit Lake Bomoseen and I was always so drawn to Middlebury," she said.

After firmly establishing business roots in Shelburne, Nelson said, customers kept asking her "Where's the next store?"

"I wanted to make sure I brought a new concept that was unique and welcomed," she explained, in reference to the possibility of opening a second Elli Parr location.

Then, Nelson was presented with the opportunity to lease the space on Main Street for the Middlebury Elli Parr location. Elli Parr replaced Wild Mountain Thyme, a clothing, jewelry and knick-knacks shop that occupied the 48 Main Street location for over 45 years.

Unlike the Shelburne store, which is a multi-use space on the second floor of the Shelburne Inn where Nelson and the rest of her team spend a lot of time working on jewelry designs, the Middlebury store is both a retail shop and workshop space.

According to reporting from the Addison Independent, the Elli Parr stores have a "charm bar," where customers can look through a selection of chains and charms, matching them up into a customized necklace.

Nelson opened both the original Shelburne location and the Middlebury store to offer customers access to Elli Parr's brand as a small, handcrafted, local product business and to bring the community together.

"We opened our flagship store in Shelburne to offer our local customers more access into our brand and bring the community together," Nelson said. "Local small businesses are the heart and soul of every town and we feel beyond grateful to be part of something like that. Our intention of our events is to bring people together and offer something unique and different."

The products that the store carries are largely based on requests and feedback from customers, Nelson said. After hearing from parents that their kids often ask to come to their stores, the brand is planning to create larger kids areas in the store and more event offerings catered to kids, she added.

There is something for everyone at Elli Parr, according to Kirsten O'Connell, retail manager. The children love the "kids corner," with jewelry catered especially toward children, teens-college students love the trendiness, adult moms, dads and grandparents enjoy shopping for gifts and tourists are drawn to the locally-made Vermont products.

"Between the college, Vermont tourists and the amazing locals, we want to not only carry Vermont handmade products that we are proud of and make the community proud of but we also want to curate local events and happenings making Elli Parr a memorable destination for everyone," O'Connell said.

The store offers expanded shopping hours when there is an event going on in the Middlebury community, such as Fall Family Weekend, sporting events and special holidays, according Jaime Parmelee, lead sales manager of Elli Parr.

Nelson added that she is striving for Elli Parr to have a better relationship with the college, and that she would love for Middlebury students to work for the store. "I don't want a big conglomerate; I want a community," Nelson said.

STUDENT DEATH IS NOW PART OF THE ROUTINE AT MIDDLEBURY

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Ivan Valerio '26 passed away last Tuesday. Evelyn Mae Sorensen '25 passed away in mid-September. Yan Zhou '23 passed away of apparent suicide on Oct. 20, 2021.

After three deaths in two years, student death on campus is beginning to feel like a normal part of life at Middlebury.

While the causes of Ivan's and Evelyn's deaths — apart from the fact that there was no foul play involved — have not been shared, it is clear that the deaths themselves have affected the mental health and well-being of the larger student body. We call on the administration to make a more concerted effort to support students and faculty following a tragedy, but not only in the days immediately following such a tragedy. The college must commit resources, funding and attention to mental health on campus through expanding access to a variety of counseling services.

Similar to their responses following Evelyn's and Yan's deaths, the administration said in their initial email notifying the student body of the student's death on Tuesday morning that they plan to continue classes and other activities as usual "so that the community can remain connected." We understand that this approach is grounded in community and public health best practices, but such an attitude inevitably contributes to moving on from the tragedy before processing its weight and normalizing student deaths as a routine part of life at Middlebury.

When students were in the midst of the vibrant and lively student activities fair in September, the college released Evelyn's name as the student who had passed away in Forest Hall. This experience encapsulates how normalized these events have become. Students are forced to act as though student death is a casual part of their afternoon, rather than a tragedy. The initial email announcing a student death last Tuesday came at 11:13 a.m., and students were expected to begin their 11:15 am. lectures a mere two minutes later.

Professors with classes scheduled for late Tuesday morning or afternoon had to act on their feet to comfort their students in the wake of the tragic news, and they did so in varying ways. Board members noted everything from professors breaking down and crying in front of their students to professors telling personal stories about dealing with loss to some not acknowledging the news at all.

There is no good way to announce a student has died on campus. But there are far better ways to support a community. We need more than a bulleted list of the same six resources over and over again: TimelyCare, College Counseling, Scott Center Chaplains, the Abernathy Room gathering space, Care Management and the Department of Public Safety. These are merely the standard mental health resources on campus, but student deaths should not be treated as standard occurrences. Tragedies like these call for more intensive support.

We all feel the pain of these deaths in different ways. We do not know what the student body needs at this time of mourning, and we are not sure how to make use of temporary dean drop-in hours or one-time offers to write notes to our loved ones. Many professors have opened their doors to students, but they were not trained in graduate school to support their students through a death on campus. The administration must provide professors with more guidance and support in dealing with tragedy in the community.

Middlebury is prepared to support students who need to drop in to de-stress for 20 minutes, but it is not prepared for students who are in crisis, or undergoing serious challenges. We call for specialized professionals to be available for students in need of intensive support, such as external grief counselors and a more diverse staff of long-term therapists. Middlebury must raise the entry-level salary for college counselors from the listed starting salary of $60,000. Doing so would attract and retain more high quality counselors at the college. It is appalling that mental health resources were not even mentioned in the college's recently launched For Every Future campaign. Students have been asking for better resources for years, and the college has failed to listen. Funding assistant coach positions and building renovations are a higher priority than mental health resources to the administration, and we have clearly seen the results this semester.

We need to consider how our long-term community can be unified and built on campus. The Commons System once provided students with an assigned Dean who was on campus and available to meet with students in a comfortable, unforced environment. It also established defined communities outside of individual friend groups, classes and clubs, which benefited students who otherwise may have felt isolated. We now struggle to name a specific person or resource where students are supposed to turn when experiencing a mental health crisis or personal struggle. Likewise, Deans no longer remain with one group of students throughout their time here, weakening connections and relationships. This is especially true for junior and senior students, who belong to some of the largest classes in Middlebury history yet share only one dean among the two class years. We call for the intentional creation of such communities with ties to specific people as designated available resources to fill this gap in Middlebury life.

In a time of grief where the college has proven unable to support us, it falls on students to support one another. It can be uncomfortable to talk about mental illness, but we must foster an environment that is genuinely dedicated to supporting one another. While it is devastating that we have to help each other through such horrific events, students have shown remarkable strength and care so far. Keep your hearts open, and keep your friends close. Though Middlebury's insularity can be frustrating at times, its closeness is an important strength of our community when faced with tragedy.

The aforementioned "For Every Future" campaign was launched by the college in between two student deaths, brushing past the obvious deficit in mental health resources on campus with glossy, full-page spreads of Middlebury students thriving at the college. Millions of dollars will go to professional development and sabbaticals; new residence halls and architectural classrooms; and student internships and experiential learning — but nothing for mental health. If the college's allocation of money reflects its priorities, we are forced to consider the underlying question: for whose future?

AN UNEXPECTED DEFENSE OF THE MIDDLEBURY P.E. CREDITS

Op-Ed

***Ryan McElroy** is a member of the class of 2025 and a Managing Editor for The Campus.*

As I hustled along South Street, dripping with September sweat after underestimating both the heat and the distance to Middlebury's Ralph Myhre Golf Course, I regretted enrolling for Beginning Golf this fall.

Although exacerbated by the blazing sun that day, this has largely been my long-standing attitude towards the P.E. credits at Middlebury. I was once an outspoken critic of the college's Physical Education credits: the two classes involving "lifetime sports and activities" required for every Middlebury degree. I saw the credits as a farce and a distraction from my academic education at Middlebury. I remained cynical through my one-day CPR course during my first spring at the college and held firm as I spent two J-Terms without enrolling in a ski class. Up until a few weeks ago, I thought about writing an op-ed criticizing the requirement altogether.

But after five weeks of Beginning Golf — five weeks that challenged me in ways that no academic course has, five weeks with a dedicated coach and 12 random students from across Middlebury — I had a change of heart. A realization. You could even call this an epiphany: Middlebury P.E. credits can be enjoyable and worthwhile experiences that complement and complete the college's promised liberal arts education.

I had low expectations for the course when I enrolled this fall, but as I went through the motions of learning how to swing a club, how to have an 'athletic stance' and how to putt a ball, I found myself enjoying the disruption it created in my day. I enjoyed taking the 15 minutes to walk to the far-off golf course; it was a place where I did not need to speak up in class for participation points or write down every term my professor mentioned. If I showed up on time, hit some golf balls and managed not to hurt anyone, I would have done my job for the hour.

The class also allowed me to get to know people from across the college whom I otherwise never would have met. For some class members, it was a fun time to practice their swings and show us new golfers how the game worked; for others like me, it was a low-pressure environment to try out golfing and learn from Middlebury staff and fellow students. I would strongly urge Middlebury students to embrace the idea of P.E. credits as an opportunity, not an obstacle; think about what interests you most or what you have never considered before, and find a class that will challenge you accordingly.

I chose Beginning Golf, in part, because I was thinking about my future. I assumed at some point I would need to go onto a golf course in the corporate world, and I wanted to avoid being embarrassed by not knowing the basics. I also wanted to connect with friends and family who play golf, so that I might understand why they loved the sport so dearly. At the very least, I hoped it might help me come up with better responses when someone makes a joke about my name's similarity to Rory McIlroy, the one-time number-one golfer in the world.

My two classes a week spent on the course — ten overall — will not make me a trophy-winning pro, nor will I be joining the Middlebury golf team next season. I enjoyed the time spent with my classmates in the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape, finally noticing the sweeping mountain ranges where fall foliage gradually painted the countryside in tints of burnt orange, shades of eye-catching reds and splashes of soft yellow. I hope to pick up the clubs again sometime in the future and take up the hobby. That day may even come sooner than I expected — the college offers Intermediate Golf every spring semester, after all.

My Beginning Golf class also has compounded a lesson I've been slowly learning this year: the importance of slowing down and appreciating the college where I am spending four years of my life.

Elsewhere, they say stop and smell the roses. At Middlebury, I learned to stop and take in the Green Mountains. Beginning Golf helped me slow down enough for an hour every Tuesday and Thursday, and I hope everyone considers creating space for themselves in order to self-reflect and appreciate Middlebury's natural beauty. I realized that this is the most jaw-droppingly beautiful place I have lived thus far and may ever live; how could I spend my days only rushing between classes and dining halls, too often texting or checking email on my phone, in such an amazing landscape?

I will add one caveat to my unexpected enthusiasm thus far: No P.E. course at Middlebury should cost money. In the CPR course that I took in my first year, there was a $115 fee. I paid that for the privilege of spending only a few hours on a Saturday reviewing an important skill to gain my first credit. Connecticut, where I am from, requires its students to graduate with CPR skills, and I had taken my First Aid merit badge in Boy Scouts, but I felt rusty and appreciated the opportunity to review those skills in college.

I understand the need to hire an external instructor trained in healthcare to teach students CPR and first aid, but the college should not restrict learning about such a vital, lifesaving ability for its students based on their ability or willingness to pay for it. Chest compressions are a far more useful skill than my newfound ability with a nine iron, but Middlebury has made the former something I paid for and the latter something free to all students.

Whether the class takes place on the putting green or it involves a CPR dummy, Middlebury P.E. credits help students gain new skills for their life and explore new areas of the college they may have not previously visited. As I reached the last class of Beginning Golf in October, I decided to practice my skills one last time and hone in on what I had learned throughout the fall.

I felt my body fall into my practiced stance, straightened my arms and swung. I went through my whole basket of bright yellow golf balls, then began to borrow the other balls people had discarded and left behind. It was my most consistent round on the range yet. My scavenged supply dwindled until I had one golf ball remaining.

I know I did not have the strongest shot, nor had I perfected my swing. But with the growing fatigue in my arms, the scuffed turf underfoot and everyone else already packed up, I felt a sense of individual accomplishment and pride in realizing how far I had come from that first day of class.

It was something unique and distinct from the feeling of succeeding on a physics exam or finally submitting that 12-page history paper. It was not intellectual or theoretical; I could sense each swing becoming smoother, watch as the ball traveled down the range and feel calluses beginning to develop on my hands. I am grateful that the P.E. credits I once saw as an irritating distraction forced on us by the college had created such tangible changes in my life and college experience.

As I raised my tired arms for the final shot, readied my stance and swung at that last neon yellow ball, I knew then that I had gained something at Middlebury that could not be found anywhere else but here.

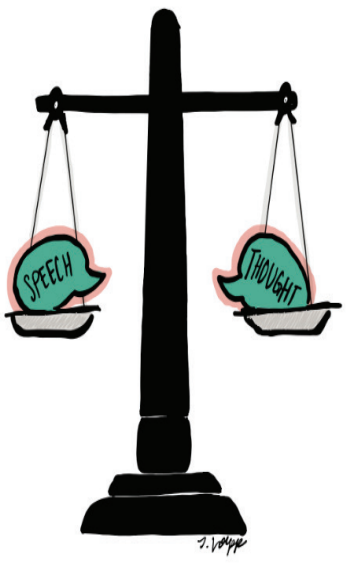
Ryan McElroy/The Middlebury Campus

The breathtaking view of the mountain ranges near the Ralph Myhre Golf Course.

WE NEED THOUGHTFUL VIEWS, CAUTIOUSLY STATED

Op-Ed

Griffin Fill *is a member of the class of 2023.5.*



Middlebury seems to be an institution that values justice. We certainly talk about it constantly, so if one can infer importance from repetition, we do value it. Climate Justice, Reproductive Justice, Housing Justice, Environmental Justice. But to be able to have productive discussions about those topics, we (as students and citizens) need to have a sense of justice that is grounded in more than a vague sense of 'what feels right' or the values that our community tells us are correct. This lack of a tried and tested, thoughtful and rigorous, ethical framework to defend our convictions is a dangerous weakness.

Conservatives often view America's elite colleges and universities as factories for what commentators have described as 'woke Marxist culture warriors,' with administrations hoping to produce a vanguard of left-wing radicals. To be fair, this is not an entirely inaccurate accusation. Historically, universities have served as a breeding ground for far-left movements like Students for a Democratic Society, which, in turn, spawned the Weather Underground, a terrorist organization. At present, the Democratic Socialists for America find some of their strongest support at colleges and universities, with hundreds of chapters nationwide.

But this claim still misunderstands what happens on the American college campus. While there is a small minority of students who might be accurately called aspiring professional revolutionaries, from what I have seen at Middlebury, the vast majority are not. Living within a community with an illusion of ideological uniformity like Middlebury can create a skin-deep allegiance to certain values on the part of many, but that is not the same as molding a true believer.

Much of this comes down to the nature of the contemporary college campus. Most students attend college to get an education and have the "college experience." They do not come to be turned into ideological crusaders. Both in and outside of the classroom, students exist in a space dominated by left-wing voices, concepts, norms, and expectations. Shane Silverman's article recently reminded us just how rampant this can be. Within the Middlebury bubble, there is an illusion of ordered uniformity in which we can see how specific political and intellectual perspectives are not merely accepted but taken for granted. Occam's razor tells us to look for parsimony if we want to discover the truth. In this instance, the simple truth is that most students become vaguely progressive because it is easy.

John Stuart Mill's essay "On Liberty" makes a rousing defense of near-absolute free speech. One of his most important arguments is how censorship and monopoly of discourse will be to the dominant party's detriment. Without an adversary to encourage rigorous debate, they lose the opportunity to think rigorously. Just as sharpening a knife requires a whetstone, honing an argument necessitates open debate. No viewpoint ever became any more thoughtful or incisive while being spewed unopposed from the podium.

I fear that after not facing any serious resistance to the supposedly unanimous viewpoint for some time, people lose the ability to defend it effectively. Growing up in a (relatively) stable liberal democracy, it would take most people a second to structure a thoughtful defense of that system. I suspect that this is the root of what some on the right call outrage culture. Without the ability to articulate why they think what they think, people can quickly turn to anger. I'd argue that happens for the simple reason that when you build your identity on assumptions and they are questioned, you see yourself as being questioned. Without practice in separating politics from identity, or even practice in questioning one's own assumptions, there is no good outcome.

There are practical consequences to such a lack of ideological introspection. I recently saw a picture of a pro-Palestinian protest with several people holding a banner saying "Reproductive Justice Means a Free Palestine." I understand the intersectional argument of a single struggle, but I don't see how people can so easily bridge the chasm of values and ideology that divide Western reproductive rights activists and both Hamas and Fatah. Could most of the people chanting such a slogan articulate what that means in practice? To those who can effectively make such an argument, I welcome the discussion. We need it, desperately.

Although they do not dominate our campus space in the same way, the illusion of uniformity makes campus conservatives just as intellectually lazy. I know many right-wing college students don't bother to seriously engage with politics on campus. With little chance of a serious discussion and a fear of ostracization, why would they? This inevitably leaves the space to be occupied by the radical fringe. That remainder is happy to feed an outrage machine by saying truly absurd things, in it for the thrill of glorious battle more than the prosaic reality of discourse.

Simply put, if we care about the good, (and thus the pursuit of justice—real justice) we have to ground it in something substantive. Suppressing any alternative perspective with a thick blanket of dogma might create the illusion of deeply held views, but it is just that—an illusion. Students know what they are supposed to think, but I fear that few have thought about why they think those things. The tendency to suffocate the chaotic and messy dialectical process required to produce deeply considered perspective is not strength. It is weakness. Middlebury's failure to educate students on how to articulate and defend their views and values politely and effectively will, in the long run, damage the students, the institution, and our society. Without exposure to the best thought-out versions of the ideologies we disagree with, our institution's value degrades. With that, the students of those institutions suffer, for they are not receiving the best education and will lack the knowledge of how to defend their conception of justice and change the minds of those who disagree with them. If our society's most educated and most devoted to justice are unable to convince others to agree with them, the society suffers: We live in a democracy, and restating dogma doesn't swing any votes in Pennsylvania or Arizona. If you want to win instead of simply feeling morally superior, you need the tools to convince people you are right.

LET'S TALK FONT

Op-Ed

Libby Scaperotta *is a member of the class of 2023.5 and is the Senior Opinions Editor for The Campus*

The other day I was sitting next to a classmate. Together, we were reading their typed document when I couldn't help but notice their preposterous font choice: Calibri. When I pointed this out, they sang its praises, describing how much they loved the sans-serif font with its minimalist nature and "clean" feeling. It just so happened that I couldn't disagree more. Nonetheless, I respect and share the passion for fonts.

Fonts are so important. As students, artists and people, we put so much time into creating our work, but sometimes write off the importance of the delivery — the font that others use to read it. Fonts are key to visual storytelling. They elicit emotion and sentiments about your text and stories. They influence how a reader interacts with the page and, consequently, the content. You wouldn't use Comic Sans for a legal brief! That would just be silly.

To be honest, I talk a lot about fonts. Over these past few years, I have worked with Middlebury Geographic as a layout design editor, and, let me tell you, we talk fonts. They are crucial to curating the right "vibe" for each piece and, therefore, enhance our storytelling ability.

If you don't think that font is important or influential, please explain the early 2000s Microsoft WordArt obsession to me. Try.

Microsoft WordArt literally took over our generation. As a child in 2009, I had printed copies of my name in various WordArt forms, just for my enjoyment. Not even to do anything with. This incident is not unique to me — everyone I knew around my age was obsessed with WordArt. This is for good reason: WordArt rocks!

In other words, font is art. And it's really important! A good friend of mine said the most ridiculous thing about fonts the other morning. I was creating a logo, of which font is obviously of the utmost importance, but I couldn't find the exact one I desired on Photoshop. He remarked: "Just make it all caps, then the font won't matter." As if! Font so matters!

On a more serious note, fonts are important as a means of accessibility. Aspects of font like its serif, size, boldness and overall legibility are highly influential when it comes to how people engage with it. Fonts like Calibri, Arial and Times New Roman are widely available and well-known for their accessibility. Font choice matters to tell your story in a visual manner that everyone can enjoy.

So, as a self-declared expert of fonts and their associated vibes, I'm going to give y'all my unsolicited opinion on several fonts. For context, as I describe these fonts, sans-serif fonts like Calibri or Arial do not have the little extensions on the ends of the letters, while Times New Roman and Garamond have serifs. Sans-serif fonts are regarded as more modern while serif fonts are a bit more traditional. For full transparency, my opinion is informed as someone who prefers a font with serif.

Complete disclaimer: I formed my opinions on these fonts immediately after typing out their names while writing this op-ed, and my opinions are subject to change, even as I edit this. In fact, I encourage fluid font opinions — our feelings and styles of art (and, therefore, fonts) are ever-evolving as we grow, learn and change. (My opinions on fonts are also not indicative of my opinions on the person who uses the font, I love everyone and their font choice). ((I also have no real merit in making any judgments on font choice)).

Arial: Default. It's okay. Very plain. Not exciting. Or cool at all. But legible.

Calibri: Weird choice, but okay. Calibri feels like the younger sibling of Arial. It's a little more hip and happening. But, not my favorite (I prefer fonts with serifs if I'm typing something academic). I respect all my peers who admire Calibri and hope that everyone becomes as passionate about their choice of font.

Times New Roman: Professional. Academic. Respectable. But you definitely only use Times New Roman because all your professors want you to. Break free!

Lato: I have never known anyone to use this. But, honestly, I kinda like it. If you don't like serifs, I would choose this any day over Arial or Calibri. It is, however, peculiar. I can't quite decide what I find so silly about it, but there is an air of fun with Lato. A type of fun that perhaps is better for making a poster than typing your research paper.

Georgia: I also have never really seen anyone use this. I think I like it... (Edit: I have since been informed that the Campus prints in Georgia. So I have seen this before, and now I like it even more).

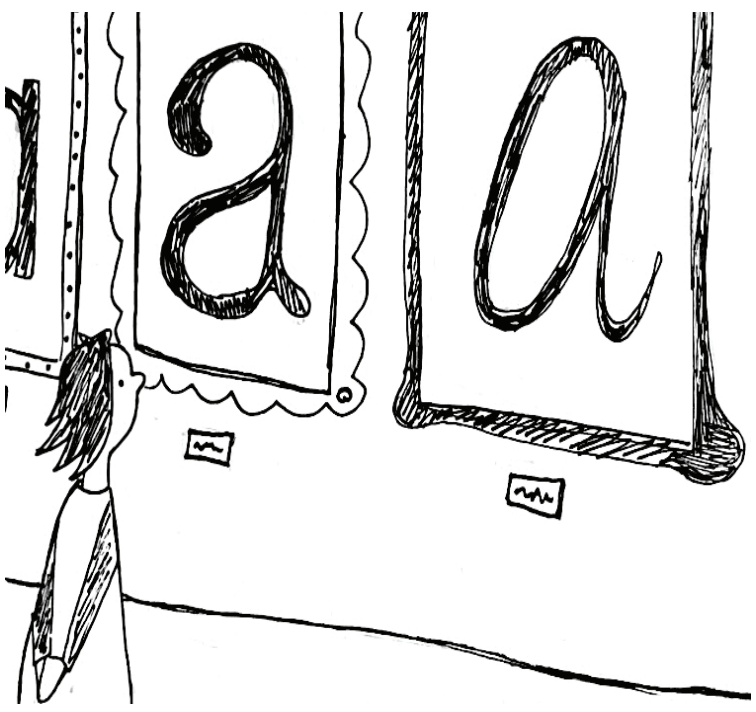
Comic sans: Unacceptable! Unless it is used in an ironic manner — I typically find that funny. But Comic Sans used seriously is never cool! Even if you're making a document for children. Comic Sans does not look friendly in my opinion, and I bet a kid would rather read a document written in Lato.

Playfair Display: I have used this before in communications notes. It's pretty compressed. I feel like I would have liked this font a couple of years ago, as it kind of resembles my handwriting from that time. But now, it's just not for me. I have grown out of Playfair Display and my current handwriting is significantly worse.

Roboto: Sans-serif... interesting. I actually think this could maybe take the spot as my favorite sans-serif font (Until I am proven otherwise). Typing with Roboto makes me feel like I am an AI chatbot. It shakes things up. It makes me feel like I would be better at data analysis while writing in this font.

If you were wondering, my font of choice is Garamond. Obviously. Garamond is professional yet flirty. It has a great serif. It reads well. It looks fun. It's hot. I set it as my default. Obviously.

All this goes to say that font choice is incredibly important in its ability to convey our work effectively and with purpose to others. I encourage you all to consider what role your font could have when it's utilized in your pieces of work. We all put so much effort into what we create, so it is important to use a font that can enhance your creations. And, it's fun.



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SPECS Panther Column #3:
An Analysis of "Sex Education"

Op-Ed

Lizzy Guzman *and* **Emilia Zenker** *are members of the class of 2026.5 and 2026 and are SPECS peer educators.*

SPECS Panther is a mascot for SPECS (sex-positive education for college students) and serves the Middlebury community. As a part of Health & Wellness Education, SPECS Panther seeks to educate and spark independent dialogue, not be the end-all be-all resource on campus. We encourage Midd kids to break down the walls of silence by engaging in sex-positive conversation — wherever, with whomever, and about whatever is most comfortable, easy, and safe for you. Our editions will be fun and educational!

SPECS Panther is back and better than ever, this time honing in on a column about pop culture. Media portrayal of sex, sexuality and sexual health for teenagers is essential to normalize what can sometimes be embarrassing or seemingly silly conversations. An emphasis on visibility of sex-positivity and queer experiences further destigmatizes realities that many individuals face. In fact, SPECS held a screening on Nov. 8 of the Netflix hit series "Sex Education." The purpose of the screening was to highlight how college students benefit from watching relatable and underrepresented experiences. The show illustrates the ubiquity of sex and its innate awkwardness, intimacy and eroticism. But, as viewers ourselves, SPECS peer educators noticed key missed opportunities for further discussion as well as many complimentary moments.

This show serves to portray a shameless, authentic world of sex, presented through the eyes of high schoolers. It realistically captures many of the awkward moments that sex and sex education can involve, including when the shy protagonist, Otis, repeatedly encounters his mother's various sexual escapades. Another relatable scene is when Otis's mother catches him masturbating, a worry many high schoolers share.

Jean — Otis' mother and well-renowned sex and relationship therapist — is the show's beacon of sex positivity, as she continually gives constructive advice and helps individuals and couples resolve their sexual qualms. In Season 2, Jean opens a sex clinic at her son's high school after learning about the students' questions and concerns regarding their sex lives. Analyzing this through the lens of SPECS, the

show fulfills its promise by normalizing the idea of seeking help, as many characters find

refuge in having an educated, nonjudgmental sex therapist on campus. Students seek out Jean with questions about both barrier and non-barrier birth control methods, STIs, sexual performance and other sexual health concerns. These interactions shine a spotlight on the abundance of anxieties that teenagers have about sex during a time when their hormones are drastically changing.

Additionally, the series provides an intimate view of complicated experiences and feelings surrounding sex and coercion. In Season 3, Cal (they/them) reflects on their struggles with gender dysphoria and feeling disconnected from their sex assigned at birth. Worries about bathrooms, genitalia and gender non-inclusive language unfold. These are issues that adolescents, teenagers and adults are experiencing on a worldwide scale. The show offers direct insight into the lives of queer individuals who are trying — and often struggling — to understand their sexuality and gender-identity. Cal grapples with their own potentially stigmatized feelings around sexuality and gender-presentation, leading to realistic and uncomfortable conflicts. However, the show emphasizes clear moments of unabashed queer joy, portraying a nuanced balance between the harsh realities that queer folks endure and the moments and experiences of unadulterated euphoria that come with free expression and honesty.

While the show does a great job of highlighting realistic, embarrassing, pleasurable and even humorous sexual experiences, our SPECS lens requires careful critiques of some of the content. For example, Otis' relationship with sex changes dramatically throughout the course of the show. The shy protagonist opens the series by announcing his hesitancy toward sex and discomfort in his own sexuality. In fact, it was briefly suggested that Otis thought that he may be asexual. Asexuality is oftentimes depicted as a "stage" in someone's sexual trajectory, and while this can be true for some, it is critical to understand asexuality as its own prevalent

sexual identity.

Though Otis declares that he feels intense pressure to engage in sex while grappling with his complicated feelings about his sexual disinterest, much of his bildungsroman, or coming of age story, revolves around his own sexual efforts, which are plagued by heightened societal expectations, to "lose his virginity." In Season 2, Episode 7, Otis wakes up in a hungover state after a night of drinking and partying, a phenomenon not uncommon at Middlebury. To his surprise, Ruby discloses that they had sex the night before, an encounter Otis does not remember. Yet, while it is important that the series sheds light on realistic experiences of sex and alcohol, the framing should be adjusted to further highlight the violation of Otis' consent. In fact, this scene explicitly violates the FRIES model of consent that SPECS utilizes, which outlines that consent must be freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic and specific. The show portrays this breach of consent in an overly nonchalant manner that perpetuates the societally constructed idea that male-presenting individuals cannot be victims of sexual assault. These problematic depictions fail to acknowledge the deeply nuanced, hyper-personal and emotional aspects of consent violations. For a series such as "Sex Education" that aims to promote sex positivity, healthier and more serious discussions are warranted.

Although seeking peer or professional help can be important, it is equally important to remember that you have the final say in your own unique sexual journey. Otis frequently offers advice to many of his peers, with enthusiastic responses.The advice you receive — whether from the show or in your personal life — may be unbiased, but that does not mean you have to follow it, especially if it makes you feel uncomfortable. It is crucial to remember that what works for one person might not work for you, and that is perfectly normal! You have to trust your own instincts, and no one else should ever have the power to decide what you should or should not do with your own body. Your comfort and consent must always be of the highest importance in your sexual journey.

Sex therapists themselves also face stereotypes. Ultimately, society often views sex therapists as obsessively interested in sex and overly sexual people. However, "Sex Education" demonstrates that being a sex therapist is more about education, mentality and support rather than one's personal quantity of sexual experiences. Jean's sex-positive attitude aids in fostering healthy and open conversations about sex. The show's representation of sex therapists challenges these common misconceptions about sex and highlights the significance of a sex-positive approach — consistent with the mission of SPECS as a peer-educator organization.

Honest, nonjudgmental communication is the pinnacle of the safe, inclusive space to talk about sex that SPECS strives to establish on campus. Fundamentally, SPECS hopes that "Sex Education" — along with our additional lens of analysis — will further empower Midd kids to make personal sexual-health decisions on their own terms without the burden of societal expectations and clichés.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: AERO-SKIJORING, A SHORT-LIVED, UNIQUELY MIDDLEBURY SPORT

BY GRACE SANDBACH
Contributing Writer

The first snow of the season came to Middlebury on Nov. 1, and despite this year's unpredictable weather, there has been an overall drop in temperature as we get closer to winter. But as the temperature drops, our hopes for snow and the prospect of winter sports begin to rise. We see the white dusting on our trees, stark and sparkling. We watch the still-green grass become blanketed and the color wiped away. Ice begins to appear at the edges of Lake Champlain and Lake Dunmore. The flurries linger outside our classroom windows — distracting and exciting. Public Safety tells us to close our windows over break: the pipes might freeze! Some begin to imagine carving tracks through the hills and — onto Lake Champlain?

You might be questioning why students come far and wide to such a frigid, desolate landscape. Why leave behind suburbia, beaches, oceans and city lights? I'll tell you why: skiing! By enrolling at Middlebury College, students are volunteering to endure cold, snowy winters, and with the low temperatures inevitably comes a sometimes overwhelmingly adventurous ski-culture.

But some of us are sick of skiers constantly bragging about the way they "shredded that gnar" or "tore up that bend." We can stand it no longer! We need a new winter sport to take hold of our students and give them purpose.

If you are tired of Middlebury's downhill and cross country ski culture or are looking to spice up your athletic talents, look no further: Skijoring is a term taken from the Norwegian word "skikjøring" that describes the form of transport in which a person on skis is attached to a horse or other animal and is pulled along behind them. Skijoring gained popularity and progressed from a mode of transport to a world-renowned competitive sport, debuting in the Olympics in 1928 with horseback riders pulling a skier along behind them.

In the mid 1900s, Middlebury not only had a ski team, but also, according to Middlebury Special Collections, a flying club: the Flying Panthers. Men's ski coach Robert "Bobo" Sheehan '44 saw an opportunity for something new. Skijoring had been known to develop from skiers being pulled by animals or land-based motor vehicles, but with the Flying Panthers's access to their very own plane, Sheehan created a sport he called "aero-skijoring."

Lake Champlain, which at the time froze to a much greater extent than it does now due to climate change, offered a large and flat area such that a small plane could use it as a take off and landing point. Per Sheehan's request, the Flying Panthers, who normally practiced at the Middlebury State Airport, used Lake Champlain to offer a fun alternative from cross-country or downhill skiing.

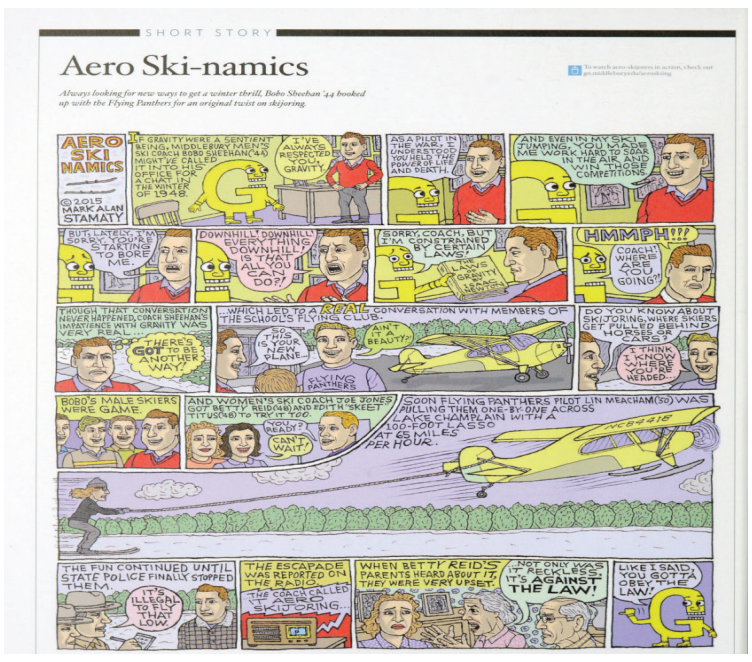
Much of the men's ski team, as well as a couple of members of the women's ski team, showed up for the debut of this new sport Sheehan had created. One at a time they would attach themselves to the plane with a 100-foot lasso. The plane, piloted by Flying Panthers member Lin Meacham '50, would build speed and eventually lift off the lake, reaching a speed of over 65 miles per hour.

This new sport, despite its up-and-coming promise, was not meant to be. Vermont State Police arrived on the scene and deemed the whole thing "illegal." Apparently, planes are not meant to be flown only ten feet off the ground, and skiers are not meant to be attached to them. A radio report got some of the daring skiers in trouble with their parents, but no harm came to anyone — except to the sport of aero-skijoring, which, sadly, was over before it had really begun.

Clearly, Sheehan had developed something genius that the world was not yet ready for. Only one question remains: When will it be ready?

MIDDLEBURY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/COURTESY PHOTO

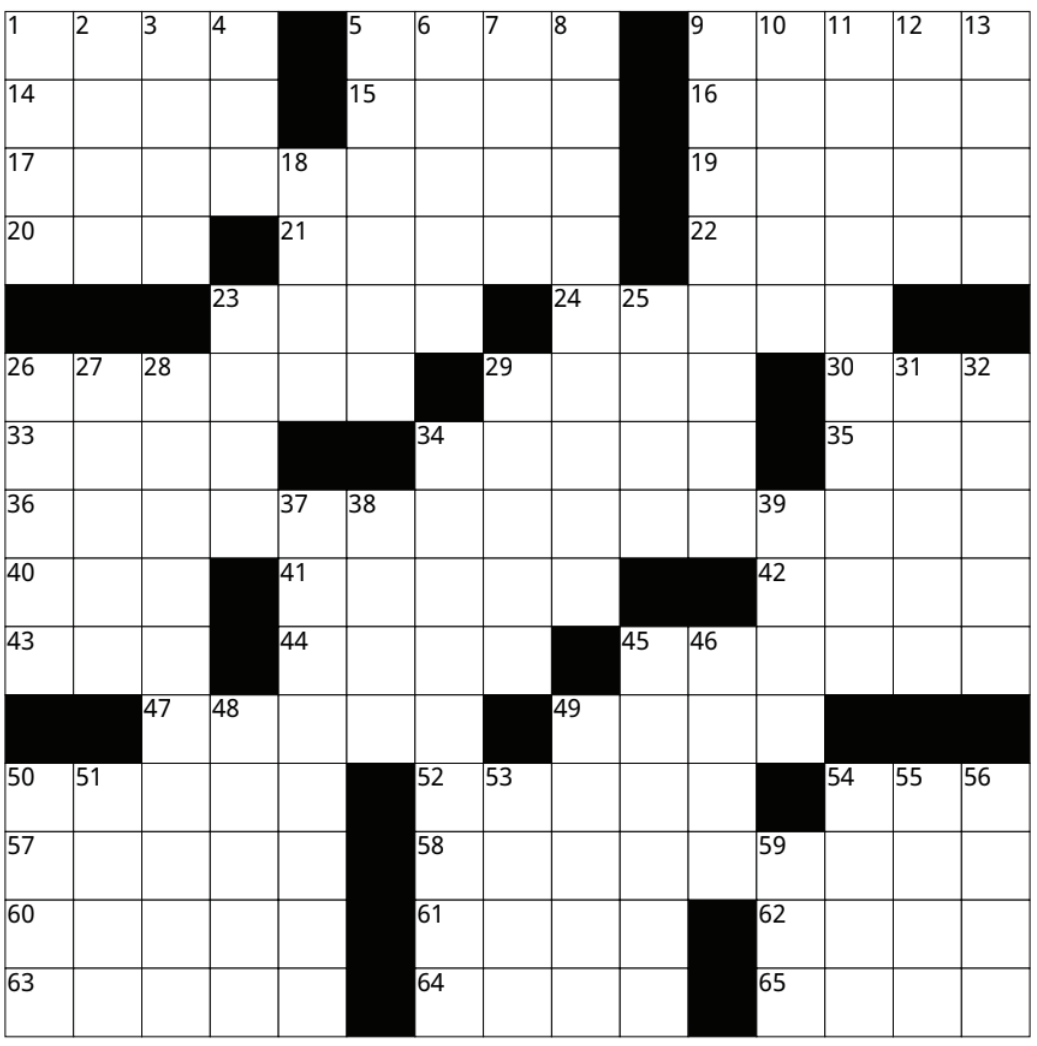
During its short-lived existence, aero-skijoring was a thrilling edition to Middlebury's winter sport repetoir.



MIDDLEBURY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS/COURTESY PHOTO

Published in a 2015 issue of Middlebury Magazine, a cartoon by the well-known cartoonist Mark Alan Stamaty playfully depicts the aero-skijoring story.

Crossword for you!



ACROSS

1 Tic-___ (popular candies)
5 Big hairdos
9 They're entered in court
14 Hard to come by
15 August (Fr.)
16 First name of Tony Soprano's mother
17 Totally wipe out, oust
19 Long for
20 Harden
21 Sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch?
22 Dug up (for diamonds, iron, etc.)
23 Metallica drummer Ulrich
24 ___ tag
26 Proportions
29 Lover boy
30 12th graders: Abbr.
33 Buzzing, like a beehive
34 Attacked, tore into
35 Talent and sports agency based in Los Angeles
36 Seeing a twister (like Dorothy)
40 Antlered animal
41 Seven-time All-Star third baseman Scott ___
42 ___ Postecoglou, soccer player
43 Date, go out with
44 "No ifs, ___ or buts"
45 Distinctive emblems worn as a mark of office, membership, achievement, etc.
47 "Holy cow!"
49 Not clean, clutter
50 Ancient city on the Ganges River
52 Flora's partner
54 Doctors' org.
57 The planet we are on
58 Prior to birth
60 Informal, simplified spelling of thorough
61 Editor's mark
62 "The ___ Ranger"
63 "Cómo ___?"
64 Thomas Hardy heroine
65 Poetic nights

DOWN

1 "___ bien!"
2 Bern's river (Switzerland)
3 Political suffix (demo-, aristo-)
4 But, to Brutus
5 Face slaps
6 Speckled horses
7 Ins and ___
8 Saturated with
9 The Pilgrim's first colony with a rock
10 Peaceful protest
11 Fading from sight or memory
12 Suffix with billion or million
13 Hourglass filler
18 Golfer Aoki
23 Depict or describe in painting or words
25 Den ___ (The Hague, in the Netherlands)
26 Hotel costs
27 "Fixing ___" (Beatles song)
28 Typical November race
29 First, second, third and home
31 Vocal ____, a singers asset
32 Wise people (plural)
34 Holdsfast (that is the literal answer :0)
37 Wyoming indigenous group (plural)
38 Finished
39 Small amounts
45 ___ Reader's Encyclopedia (classic literary reference)
46 Wise ___ owl
48 Prefix with mural (sports)
49 Silences
50 Buttigieg, Davidson
51 Oohs and ___
53 Poker payment
54 Stubbed ___
55 Actress Leslie, mother to Maude
56 Pub orders
59 Pub order

Bom apetite! Dolci goes to Brazil

By Maggie Bryan
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

Following a successful semester debut in October, Middlebury's student-run fine dining club, Dolci, made a captivating return to Atwater Dining Hall on Friday, Nov. 10 for its second dinner of the semester.

The meal began with pão de quiejo, small cheesy bread rolls which are traditionally eaten as a side or snack..Guarana, a traditional Brazilian soda (served in maximum authenticity straight from the can) complemented the appetizer. Following the pão de quiejo came empanadas, some with beef and others with guava paste and cheese. The combination highlighted sweet and savory flavors, which were brought together by the empanadas' crisp and chewy shells. The main course consisted of Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a black bean and pork stew, served with rice, farofa (toasted manioc flour) and collard greens, making for a hearty combination. Finally, for a sweet end to the night, guests were treated to a three-part dessert consisting of flan, strawberry mousse and a chocolate truffle all served side by side in a three-bowl dish.

While October's Dolci dinner, "Knolci," highlighted the Knoll, the college's on-campus farm, this dinner's Head Chef Sarah Furtado '25 took guests on a flavorful, four-course journey 4,000 miles away from Vermont to Brazil in "Dolci Brasileiro."

Furtado completed Dolci's Head Chef application last spring, and Dolci board members voted for her leadership at the beginning of the fall out of a pool of about 10 applicants. When asked what drew them to Furtado's application, Dolci board members Grayson Shanley Barr '23.5, Elliote Muir '25.5 and Jaeden Lee '24 cited Furtado's enthusiastic proposal and noted the importance of using Dolci as a platform to highlight diverse cuisine.

At the beginning of the fall semester, Furtado began meeting regularly with Lee and Barr to brainstorm a menu. Throughout the process, Furtado, whose parents are from Brazil, tried to channel the flavors of her childhood while also being realistic about which ingredients could be sourced and which recipes could be easily scaled to 120 servings. The final menu ultimately reflected some of Furtado's favorite Brazilian dishes: pão de queijo (tapioca cheese bread), pastel de carne and pastel romeu e julieta (empanadas stuffed with beef or guava and cheese), feijoada (a meat and bean stew), pudim de leite (flan), danoninho (yogurt mousse) and brigadeiro (chocolate truffle).

Manar Al-Rikabi/Courtesy Photo

Dolci Brasileiro's second course featured guava and cheese and beef empanadas.

Unlike Knolci, which emphasized food relocalization and sourced much of its produce from the Knoll, this dinner incorporated ingredients from far and wide. Furtado explained that in order to source authentic ingredients, the team had to order several foods through online Brazilian foods markets. Doing so allowed the chefs to secure special Brazilian meat, signature Guarana Brazilian soda, guava paste and more.

However, shipping ingredients from across the country and the world did create some "snafus" according to Barr.

"We ordered meat, and it was delivered but no one realized it was meat in the box, so it wasn't refrigerated. And so we got there on Monday of the week of the dinner and the meat just hadn't been refrigerated, so we had to order more meat," Barr said.

One of the ingredients the team ordered, passion fruit, never showed up, forcing them to adapt their dessert at the last minute.

Despite some inevitable small bumps in the road, the Dolci team applauded Furtado's dedication throughout the process, which ultimately made the dinner go as smoothly, and tastily, as possible. With some slight adjustments and a new order of (fresh) meat, the meal came together in a resounding success.

"It was just really seamless and she worked incredibly hard. We really appreciated that as a Dolci board," Barr said.

Unlike Knolci, which consisted of mainly family-style recipes, "Dolci Brasileiro's" dishes were served mainly as single servings. Muir reflected on the importance

Manar Al-Rikabi/Courtesy Photo

The main course featured feijoada, Brazil's national dish.

of plating and portioning and explained that what may seem like an arbitrary choice actually has greater significance in terms of food waste, an impact that was revealed after the dinner.

"I think that family-style is definitely the best way to go for minimizing food waste. For [Furtado's] dinner we really wanted to follow her lead on her vision for serving and plating. I think we did pretty well on food waste. We weren't seeing a ton of food coming off the tables," Muir said. "We're always kind of thinking about, especially with having multiple courses... 'how much food should we be giving people on the fourth course when they're three courses in and starting to get full?'"

While carrying Knolci's values of food-waste minimization into this dinner, "Dolci Brasileiro" highlighted some different values as well. Many board members, including Lee, Barr and Muir, reflected on the board's shared interest in providing a platform for diverse cultures, especially in a place like Vermont, which lacks diversity in international cuisine offerings.

"For me personally, it's very, very important to be able to provide the space for not only the people who come in to cook, but for the people to come in to eat the food as well," Lee said. "Being in this very rural homogenous place, it's very difficult to have access to this cultural food, and especially for students that come from the international background or come from a background that's different than what's the conventional background in Middlebury. That's something I value a lot and one of the biggest reasons why I love cooking for Dolci."

As guests finished their dessert, Furtado, other chefs and the Dolci board lined up in the front of the room to offer their remarks and thanks to Atwater staff. Dolci board member Sophia Giliberto '24, who spoke at the event, acknowledged the importance of gathering in community around food after what was an especially difficult week for Middlebury.

As Giliberto described, Dolci's Friday dinner was a potent reminder of the power of food as a source of joy and means of building community, especially in the midst of sorrow. Dolci hopes to continue creating community and joy and giving platforms to diverse cultures in the future.

Middlebury College Musical Theatre's 'Spelling Bee' generates buzz, Laughter in Wilson Auditorium

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

Once the home of Middlebury's gym, Wilson Hall was a fitting venue for Middlebury College Musical Theater's production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," a musical in the form of a spelling bee in a school gymnasium. Following a cast of quirky spellers in their quest for victory, the student-run show utilized four audience volunteers to round out the cast of spellers, spelling words ranging from "cow" to "lysergic acid diethylamide" in between musical numbers.

The show began with former bee champion and bee host Rona Lisa Peretti, played by Acadia Klepeis '24, introducing her favorite parts of the spelling bee, before the cast launched into the opening number, "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," which introduces each contestant.

"Spelling Bee" came together in just eight weeks, with six hours of weekly rehearsals split between vocal work with music director Gregory Marcinik '25.5, scene practice and blocking and choreography sessions.

Jonathan Mount '25.5 served not only as director, choreographer and lighting operator for the performance alongside other student techs, but was also the universal understudy, as Klepeis announced at the close of the Saturday night performance.

While Mount had previously directed a musical as a high school senior, taking charge of every step of the process was a new challenge. Ultimately, after learning how to cue the light system, Mount decided to take on the technical transitions himself.

"By the time the show rolled around, I kind of decided I wanted to run the cues since the timing is very specific, and no one knew the show better than I did timing wise," he said.

Costuming and actors' choices in physicality on stage aided characterization. With a voluminous blue tutu and bike helmet, Anna Matsuzawa '27 careened onstage as the enthusiastic speller Leaf Coneybear. Julia Levin '24 earnestly delivered as Logan Schwarzandgrubenierre, a pint-sized social justice warrior with a prominent lisp and boundless energy. The presence of audience members scattered among the two rows of contestants seated on the left side of the stage added to the hilarity.

Jonathan Mount/Courtesy Photo

The "Spelling Bee" cast brought a lively and humorous energy to Wilson Hall this past weekend.

Natalie Byers '27 played Marcy Park, an overachieving national-level speller on a journey to realize she's not "all business." With a Catholic school uniform and straight-faced delivery, Byers set a tone at the beginning of the show for Park's focused presence.

The only character without a singing part, Sophie Larocque '26 provided dry wit and stellar delivery as Vice Principal Panch, the bee's word pronouncer. She read wildly inappropriate example sentences with a straight face as contestants asked for definitions, the word's use in a sentence and other classic spelling bee questions with each round.

"When the audience is laughing, it was so hard not to laugh along with them," Larocque said.

For example, as audience member Cassie Elish '25 was asked to spell 'intolerant,' its use in a sentence was, 'We're not intolerant, we're racist.'

"Spelling Bee" was Larocque's first musical at Middlebury, and she appreciated the agency the cast had in developing their roles.

"I'm very thankful I did it. My favorite thing about it is that it was all student-run," she said. "[Mount] had our blocking and what he wanted the bones to be but he let us make a lot of choices. And I think that really allowed everyone to develop their character in a way that suited their style."

"It's been such a pleasure to see them from week two first reading the scripts being like

'Who the heck are these characters?' to then week eight or nine and just seeing them shine on the stage," Mount said.

The cast made the show personal to Middlebury by sharing made-up fun facts about each audience volunteer as they approached the microphone to spell their word. One contestant was described as being responsible for creating the hole in the wall of the Ross complex on Halloween night. None of the audience members were picked beforehand, according to Mount.

"Pandemonium" was a predictably high-energy number, where the cast rose out of their seats to perform dynamic choreography, including one moment in which all contestants joined hands in a large circle and ran around, as Chip Tolentino, played by Davis Guyton '25, crooned into the standing microphone like a rock singer. Flashing colorful lights added to the energy and the chaotic movements.

While the lighting and choreography was simple, it was well-executed to enhance the storyline. Every time Leaf Coneybear spelled a word, she entered into a trance and stared into the distance as a bright white spotlight illuminated her. Flashbacks were cued with light transitions that darkened around a smaller vignette.

In "Magic Foot," Quinn Donaldson '26.5 had a solo dance break as William Barfé, grapevining, tapping and otherwise sliding across the stage in his bright yellow Converse to emphasize his character's unique spelling technique. The end of the song brings the full cast and audience volunteers together to dance along with a classic kick-line and conga line.

The number is one of Mount's favorites to watch as a director.

"I love the choreography in that number; Quinn does a fantastic job," Mount said. "It's so funny to watch the audience volunteers try to dance to that song because it's such rigid, fast choreography."

Small recurring gags in the show let the audience in on the joke that despite the cast being college students, they are largely playing middle schoolers. Comfort counselor Mitch Mahoney, played by Luna Simon-Gonzalez '24.5, hands out juice boxes as consolation prizes to each eliminated contestant.

There are several instances of engagement with the audience as cast members venture out into the aisles. Act two begins with Chip Tolentino passing out concessions to the audience, mourning his lapse in concentration due to an uncontrollable reaction to Leaf Coneybear's older sister Marigold in "My Unfortunate Erection," a number that had audience members laughing as Guyton belted out various laments about his physical condition, hidden by a hat during Act one.

As the contestants advanced through the rounds and the audience members were all ultimately eliminated, staging played with time to accelerate and slow down the pace of spelling. At times, cast members cycled so quickly through the microphone at the front of the stage that they were not able to speak a full word, with swirling colorful lights that added to the effect of time being sped up. In other moments, the lights dimmed and Laroque and Donaldson slowed their speech to the opposite end, playing with the pacing of a bee to comedic effect.

Mars Romero '27 created a distinct presence for Olive Ostrovsky by hunching her shoulders and clenching her fists to affect a nervous, insecure energy that matched Ostrovsky's shy personality. As Ostrovsky and Barfé befriended each other, this nervous, tightly-held posture relaxed, especially during a spontaneous dance number between the duo in the second act, which featured two spotlights panning to frame the actors.

"I love the lighting for that and the whole ballet," Mount said.

The show's ending was met with a standing ovation from an audience of Middlebury students, community members and families of cast members

"I love that we had lots of students, faculty, general public. I loved hearing all the laughter echo through the auditorium. It just brought a smile to my face," Mount said.

Editor's note: Acadia Klepeis '24 is an Arts and Culture Editor.

WINTER SPORTS PREVIEWS

By SPORTS SECTION EDITORS

Women's Swim and Dive

Head Coach: Bob Rueppel
Captains: Hailey Vandenbosch '24, Louise Hay '24
Head Coach: Bob Rueppel
Captains: Hailey Vandenbosch '24, Louise Hay '24
Athletes to watch: Chloe Katz '25, Isabella Caddeau '25, Pai Easterbrook '26
Key Competitions: Bowdoin College (home, Jan. 6), Bates College (home, Jan. 14)

The Panthers are looking to bounce back this year after a disappointing campaign last season saw them finish fifth in the NESCAC. The program has only missed out on a national championship bid four times in its history, but two of those times have come in the past three seasons that the meet was held (2018–19, 2021–22 and 2022–23). The team will be looking for a reversal of fortunes this year, and they certainly have the talent to do it. Pai Easterbrook impressed in her rookie season on the diving boards, and she returns for her sophomore season ready to improve. Distance swimmer Chloe Katz is back and will be an integral figure for the team in both individual races and relay events. All-NESCAC honoree Isabella Cadeau will be another swimmer to keep an eye on this winter as she looks to defend her third-place NESCAC finish in the 50 yard backstroke from last season. In addition to the returning cast, the team has added a strong group of 11 first-years that they will be hoping can turn the tide and propel them to a higher conference finish. The team did not hit the heights they hoped for last season but if they swim at their best this year, a return to the national championship meet is more than attainable.

Men's Swim and Dive

Head Coach: Bob Rueppel
Captains: Riley Griffis '24, Chris Pedersen '24.5
Athletes to watch: Riley Griffis '24, Sam Hughes '25, Owen White '26
Key Competitions: Colby College (home, Jan. 13), NESCAC Championships (away, Feb. 22-25)

The men's swim and dive team will be looking for a change this year. The team has fallen into a streak of finishing seventh or eighth in the conference for the past nine years, and they have not made a full team appearance at the NCAA Championships since their 46th place effort in 2017-2018. Much of their hope will rest on the shoulders of Riley Griffis, who was the team's sole competitor at the national meet last year. Griffis had a stunning campaign last winter, breaking three school records in total, one by himself and two as a part of relay teams. He'll be supported by a number of strong swimmers, including Sam Hughes, who was a part of those record-breaking relays and garnered All-NESCAC honors in the 200 backstroke at NESCACs last February. The swimming Panthers will be looking to end their drought this year and return to the national meet, where they have historically finished as high as tenth.

Women's Indoor Track and Field

Head Coach: Martin Beatty
Captains: Michelle Louie ‟24, Meaghan McEnroe '24.5, Ciara Dale ‟24, Tatum Peskin ‟24
Athletes to watch: Audrey MacCLlean ‟27, Emily Rubio ‟26, Ciara Dale, Michelle Louie
Key competitions: Middlebury New England Small College Invite (Home, Jan. 28), David Hemery Valentine Invitational (Away, Feb. 9)

Women's track is looking to kick the season off with the same fire power they found at the end of last winter. Michelle Louie and Ciara Dale return as veteran competitors of last year's premier distance medley relay (DMR) after their performance at the NCAA Indoor Track & Field Championships in Alabama earned them All-American recognition last March. The Panthers also boast several returning All-Region honorees this season, including Louie, Dale, Emily Rubio, Lucy Pollitt '26, and Zoe Wang '26. Rubio returns as the Division III New England runner-up in the heptathlon, holding a school-record score of 4,477 points. Entering her sophomore winter after receiving praise in three events during her debut season, Rubio is certainly a key athlete to watch this season. But she is not the only one. Keep an eye out for first-year distance runner Audrey MacLean, who will enter the indoor season as the cross country NESCAC Rookie of the Year and conference Athlete of the Week. Looking forward, the Panthers will chase high scores at key meets, such as Middlebury's New England Small College Invite (Jan. 28), and have hopes of making another NCAA Indoor Championship appearance. Michael Pallozzi '18.5 will join the Panthers' coaching staff as an assistant coach to give them an additional boost.

Men's Indoor Track and Field

Head Coach: Martin Beatty
Captains: Sam Maxwell '24, Joel Kofman '24, Colin Breen '24, Peter Burke '24
Athletes to watch: Alec Gironda '24, Ziggy Goddard '25, Dave Filias '25, Zach Utz '26
Key Competitions: NYU DIII Invitational (away, Feb. 2), Division III New England Championships (away, Feb. 25-26)

The men's track and field team will hope their winter season goes a bit better than their last outing, where they finished an underwhelming 13th out of 25 schools at the Division III New England Championships. They will certainly have their work cut out for themselves in trying to fill the holes left by top-performers Zander Kessler '22.5 and Peter Hansen '23, who have both graduated since the team last took to the oval. Yet, there is still plenty of hope in the Panthers' camp. The men's distance runners have had a strong campaign this fall, highlighted by impressive performances from Gironda and Goddard and the emergence of rookie Ben Hughes '27. Dave Filias will lead the throwers after an impressive season last winter, while Colin Breen and Richard Clark '26 will be among the team's top sprinters. The team recently graduated a handful of their top short and middle distance athletes, so the onus will be on the younger classes to step up this winter. Although the indoor season is in part focused on building for the outdoor season in the spring, the team will still be hoping for some good results this term and fans will look for them to climb their way back up the NESCAC rankings.

Alpine Skiing

Coaches: Stever Bartlett
Captains: Bradshaw Underhill '25 and Nina Reichhelm '23.5
Athletes to watch: Sophia Tozzi '26, Alexandra Cosette '24, Bradshaw Underhill, Nick Unkovskoy '27
Key Competitions: Middlebury Carnival (home, Feb. 23-24)

The team has officially set out for fall training camps in Colorado and is looking forward to another successful season on both the men's and women's sides. Sophia Tozzi scored the top finish for the Panthers last year at the Williams Carnival, earning runner-up in slalom, and joined teammate Alexandra Cosette to compete at the NCAAs in Lake Placid, NY last March. Underhill was the sole NCAA qualifier on the men's side, locking in a solid performance of 18th place in the giant slalom and 30th in the slalom. The team has high hopes for first-year Nick Unkovskoy, who joins the Panthers with a high number of points in the slalom and giant slalom events this season, according to the International Ski and Snowboard Federation. With only six Carnival weekends, the Middlebury Carnival (EISA Championships) to close out the season will be a key competition for the Panthers looking to qualify for NCAA Nationals in Steamboat Springs, Colo. in March.

Nordic Skiing

Head Coach: Andrew Johnson
Captains: Logan Moore '25, Jack Christner '25, Quincy Massey-Bierman '25, Shea Brams '26
Athletes to watch: Shea Brams, Quincy Massey-Bierman and Logan Moore
Key competitions: Middlebury Carnival (home, Feb. 23-24)

The nordic team eagerly anticipates some rematches this year as the team aims to improve off a tenth place finish at the NCAA Championships last season. That event saw Shea Brams finish a solid 13th place overall in the Women's 20k classic, clocking in at 1:03:22.8 as the first Midd skier across the line. Quincy Massey-Bierman was not far behind as she placed 30th, managing to improve five spots overall after the first 1.25km split. The women's team finished in seventh overall in the competition, racking up 32 points. On the men's side, Logan Moore '25 looks set to lead the line after finishing the NCAA championships in a respectable 15th overall as the first Midd skier to finish in the Men's 20k classic. While it will be tough to improve upon a season that saw six skiers go to the NCAA Championships, the squad will look to improve on their eighth place finish at the event last year.

Women's Hockey

Head Coach: Bill Mandigo
Captains: Sophia Merageas '24.5, Cat Appleyard '24.5 (assistant captain)
Athletes to watch: Sophia Merageas, Britt Nawrocki '26, Molly MacQueen '25
Key competitions: Panther/Cardinal Classic (home, Nov. 25-26), Hamilton College (home, Feb. 17th)

Coming off a heart wrenching quarterfinal loss against Plattsburgh State in last season's NCAA tournament, the women's hockey team looks to bounce back this season. While the team graduated key contributors such as Jenna Letterie '22.5, Claudia Vira '23 and Eva Hendrikson '22.5, veteran forward Sophia Merageas and a hopeful crop of younger players look to build off a season that saw the team compile a strong 17–8–3 record. Look to Midd to keep up a successful offense that outscored opponents by 26 goals throughout the season, a difference that came primarily from Midd's ability to convert during power plays by outscoring opponents 18–7 to take advantage of penalties. The Panthers also hope to continue solid defense.

Men's Hockey

Head Coach: Jack Ceglarski
Captains: Chris Garbe '24, Nolan Moore '24, Jin Lee '25,
Athletes to watch: Andrej Hromic '24, Nolan Moore, Jin Lee
Key competitions: Connecticut College (home, Dec. 1), Tufts University (home, Dec. 2), Hamilton College (Home, Dec. 8), Amherst College (Home, Dec. 9)

Men's hockey is looking to rebound after a disappointing season last year, which saw them post a 5–18–1 record and miss out on postseason competitions. This year, the Panthers will be guided by Interim Head Coach Jack Ceglarski, who previously served as the program's assistant coach. The team will also be welcoming back scoring stars Andrej Hromic, Nolan Moore and Jin Lee who collectively dominated the stat sheet on offense last season. Some of the first home matches for the Panthers this season are against NESCAC opponents who beat them last season: Tufts University, Hamilton College and Amherst College. Needless to say, the Panthers will be starting the season with a clear point to prove. With a blend of old and new faces, fans could see a few surprises from the Panthers on the ice this season.

Men's Basketball

Head coach: Jeff Brown
Captains: Noah Osher '23.5, David Brennan '24.5
Athletes to watch: Sam Stevens '25, Jaden Bobbett '25, Kuba Cwalina '27
Key competitions: Hamilton College (home, Jan. 5), Amherst College (home, Jan 6.), Williams College (home, Jan. 20)

The Panthers enter the season ranked No. 24 in the country following a 20-win campaign in 2022-23. The biggest question mark is how the team will replace Alex Sobel '22.5, who has moved on to playing Division-I basketball at Sacred Heart University. Filling the gap may not be an issue, however, given the team's depth this season. The Panthers have no shortage of talent, with players including Edward Witherington '26, Jackson McKersie '26, Evan Flaks '26 and Tristan Joseph '26 expecting to see their roles elevated this season.

Women's Basketball

Head coach: KJ Krasco
Captains: Bethany Lucey '24, Emily Downer '24, Augusta Dixon '25
Athletes to watch: Gabby Stuart '26, Calie Messina '26, Brooke Collins '26, Alexa Mustafaj '25
Key competitions: Williams College (away, Jan. 20), Tufts University (home, Jan. 27), Trinity College (away, Feb. 3)

Women's basketball will look to earn its sixth winning season in the last seven years in its 2023-24 competitions. The team's star player is junior guard Alexa Mustafaj, who was a World Association of Basketball Coaches All-American Honorable Mention and First-Team All-NESCAC player last season. Other key players include Gabby Stuart '26, who had two double-doubles last season, and Calie Messina '26, who had 40 assists and 25 steals in 2022-23. The Panthers have no shortage of firepower this season, and they are young, gritty and aggressive.

Men's Squash

Head coach: Mark Lewis
Captains: PK Keller '23.5, Alex Stimpson '23.5, Kian Lalji '24
Athletes to watch: Nathan Feinstein '25, Will Lichstein '25, Caleb Boateng '26
Key competitions: Colby College (home, Jan. 12), Bates College (Home, Jan. 13), Williams College (home, Jan. 20)

Men's squash finished No. 21 in the country last season, a finish upon which the team will look to build this season. The team only graduated one player in May, returning all of its scoring players from last season. Nathan Feinstein, who competed at the top spot for the Panthers last season and qualified for the CSA Individual Championships, is one player to watch. Feinstein will be joined by Will Lichstein '25 and Caleb Boateng '26 at the top of the ladder. Also look out for senior captain PK Keller '23.5, who led the team in victories last season (14–4) and ended on a five-match winning streak.

Women's Squash

Head coach: KJ Krasco
Captains: Bethany Lucey '24, Emily Downer '24, Augusta Dixon '25
Players to watch for: Gabby Stuart '26, Calie Messina '26, Brooke Collins '26, Alexa Mustafaj '25
Key competitions: Williams College (away, Jan. 20), Tufts University (home, Jan. 27), Trinity College (away, Feb. 3)

Women's squash returns nine players and adds four first-years in 2023-24. The team is coming off a successful campaign last season in which they won the Walker Cup title at the CSA Team Championships and finished No. 17 in the nation. Similar to the men's team, women's squash returns their top performers from last season, including Abby Holding '25, Lindsey Burnham '26, and Izzy Ronda '26. Look out for another strong campaign from the Panthers this season.

WILL COSTELLO/COURTESY PHOTO

The men's basketball team lost their season opener 68-62 to the University of Saint-Joseph.

COURTESY PHOTO

The swim and dive teams will compete in their first meet this Saturday at Connecticut College.

Road to Newport News: this week's blink into field hockey's post-season success and a look at what's next

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sport's Editor

After an impressive NESCAC championship win on Nov. 5, the Middlebury field hockey team is showing no signs of slowing down as they cruised through the opening two rounds of the NCAA tournament this past weekend. Confidence in the team was high already after the Panthers made a win over ninth-ranked Williams look easy in the conference final, but after two rounds there is even more reason to believe the team can capture its eighth national title in Newport News, Va.

The Panthers kicked off the tournament with wins against Williams Smith College and Messiah University. The Panthers blanked their opponents with scores of 7–0 and 3–0, respectively, but spectators and players of both games know the scores could have been even higher.

"The box score of either game does not tell the full story," said Caroline Segal '24.5, who recorded nine shots over the two games.

Although both their opponents showed real grit — particularly Messiah, who held the Panthers to just one goal until the fourth quarter — Middlebury walked away with a decisive win on both days. Stand-out performances by Audrey Lazar '23.5 (3 goals, 5 shots), Hanna Medwar '25 (1 goal, 2 assists), and Katie George '23.5 (3 goals, 1 assist) were pivotal to the Panthers' impressive strides in the initial rounds.

The final prep has now begun as the Panthers head to the Final Four hosted by Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Va. As they seek to claim their hardware at the end of the NCAA rainbow, Middlebury will face No. 2 ranked Babson College in the NCAA Semifinals on Friday, Nov. 17. Despite Middlebury's undefeated record this season (20–0) and tradition of success in crunch time, this game will be no easy feat. Babson's only loss on the season was against Middlebury earlier this season, in their most recent matchup on Sep. 17, where the Panthers earned a closely-contested 3–2 victory over the Beavers.

Middlebury will look to finish what they started this year, seeking to convert an unbeaten regular season record into yet another trophy. A battle of the top two seeds in the semifinal matchup does not ensure a smooth path to victory, but the Panthers have proved that they are ready to step up in the Final Four and are hungry to return home with a sixth consecutive national championship win.

Middlebury Field Hockey takes on the Babson College Beavers in the NCAA National Semifinals this Friday, Nov. 17 at 3 p.m.

PATRICK BETHELETTE /COURTESY PHOTO

The field hockey team has won six consecutive NESCAC championships .

MIDDLEBURY MEN'S SOCCER TRIUMPHS ON HOME GROUNDS, ADVANCES THROUGH FIRST AND SECOND ROUNDS OF NCAA TOURNAMENT

By TING CUI
Sport's Editor

WILL COSTELLO/COURTESY PHOTO

The men's soccer team will face SUNY Cortland in the NCAA quarterfinals.

The men's soccer team scored a pair of huge wins this past weekend by advancing through the first and second stages of the national tournament. Despite an untimely exit from the NESCAC playoffs, Middlebury's undefeated regular season was enough to earn hosting rights for the first two rounds of the NCAA Division III tournament at South Street Field. The picturesque mountain setting played host to three action-packed matches, with the lineup featuring Middlebury, Babson College, Johns Hopkins University and Western New England University. This marked the Panther's sixteenth appearance and sixth consecutive entry on the national stage.

The Middlebury men's team launched the tournament on Saturday, Nov. 11, by beating Western New England 3–0, led by two goals from Jordan Saint-Louis '24. The excitement built as the second round on Sunday, Nov. 12 commenced, as Middlebury faced off against Johns Hopkins, who had defeated Babson the previous day 4–3. This was the first encounter in history between the two men's soccer programs. Two first-half goals from Tyler Payne '25 and Kyle Nilsson '25 powered Middlebury to a 2–1 victory over a skilled Johns Hopkins, securing their advancement to the third round.

"It's not often that we get the chance to host a national tournament, and so having the opportunity to play these big games in front of our family, friends, and supporters at home was a special feeling," said midfielder Eujin Chae '25. "Personally, I really enjoyed playing in front of the large crowd and seeing familiar faces on the sidelines."

The men's soccer team ventured into the tournament with a 12–1–4 overall record, boasting an unbeaten 11–0–4 mark during the regular season — the program's best since 1998. This run earned them the top seed in the NESCAC Tournament, a feat they have not achieved since 2008. Although their NESCAC journey ended in the semifinals, facing #20 Tufts in a hard-fought 2–1 defeat, the team's resilience and determination were evident throughout the weekend.

"The team played well under a lot of pressure to perform after losing and not living up to our best performances last week during NESCAC championship weekend," Nilsson said. "Every guy has a way of getting in their mindset for postseason games, especially national tournament ones, and everyone was able to enter their mindset with the right mentality and bring it on the field."

The Panthers clinched an at-large bid to the 2023 NCAA tournament, which is composed of 64 teams from a pool of over 400 in Division III. This exclusive field is composed of 41 teams that earned automatic qualification, complemented by an additional selection of 23 teams chosen at-large. The at-large qualification process is overseen by a selection committee, assessing teams based on factors like regional rankings, strength of schedule, quality wins, unfavorable losses, results against similar opponents and head-to-head matchups.

Looking ahead, Middlebury has its sights on securing the program's second NCAA Championship win, having last won in 2007 when Head Coach Alex Elias '07 was a player on the team. As the journey continues, the team is set to face SUNY Cortland in Amherst, Mass., during the sectional match-up on Nov. 18.

"I think it's pretty obvious to state that to win the NCAA tournament is the ultimate goal, but it's important to acknowledge the less recognized team goals of unity, culture, and respect amongst the squad," Nilsson said. "We pride ourselves in our togetherness in even the toughest moments, and that has shone and will shine through the rest of the postseason."

The team will certainly face tough moments on the road ahead, but if they can preserve their impressive team chemistry, the Panthers could claw their way to a national title.